

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN UTTAR PRADESH

The spirit of travel has lived on down the ages. In recorded history there have been instances whereby one is able to know that man has been travelling throughout the ages. From the very early historical period, travel has had a fascination for man. Much of the travel in the beginning was largely unconscious and rather a simple affair unlike the sophisticated travel in the modern times. The cumbersome travel procedures as we witness in travel today were not there to bother the traveller and travel was a simple affair. No travel formalities existed as there were no frontiers.

Travel in the distant past, however, was not undertaken for the purposes of pleasure since the motive was not to seek any holiday from the work situation. The primary motive for which travel was undertaken related to trade, commerce and the activities associated with it. The traveller in the ancient past was thus a trader and a merchant looking for merchandise and engaging in trade and commerce. There was, however, another type of traveller, whose motive was other than trade and commerce. This traveller was a pilgrim, a scholar in search of ancient texts, and curious wayfarer looking forward to new and exciting experiences. Seeking knowledge was his primary purpose for undertaking travel.

Travel for trade and commerce was, however, the strongest force in

the ancient past for seeking fortunes. Throughout history, traders and merchants have travelled to far off lands in order to trade with other nations and tribes. Travellers from distant lands started moving about in large numbers and visited many places for the purposes of commerce. With the gradual opening of the trade routes, travel became easier as well as regulated. At the market places, travellers made contacts with each other which resulted in increased flow of trade and commerce. Trade relations gradually matured into cultural relations and better understanding of each other's way of life. This was a favourable development towards increase in travel activity during this period.

Early travel in the orient, particularly in India and in China, was also largely based on trade and commerce. Travel to India in particular was undertaken by travellers from all over the ancient world. Both India and China enjoyed the reputation of being countries of fabulous wealth where trade and commerce flourished. It is on record that long before the Christian era, travellers visited India in search of fortune. This trend continued and became more marked in course of time with Europeans heading towards Indian shores for the sole purpose of trade and commerce.

The urge to explore new lands and to keep new knowledge in ancient and distant lands was yet another motive of travellers in subsequent periods. Although trade and commerce continued to be the strong force for many travellers to undertake journeys to distant lands,

seeking new knowledge and exploring the unexplored lands was becoming a strong urge in ancient times. Homer's great work *Odyssey* records the wanderlust of the ancient Greeks and Romans. There are innumerable references to great explorers who spent many formidable years of their lives in search of knowledge. These great explorers can, perhaps, be credited with the distinction of being the pioneers who subsequently paved the way for modern day travel.

In India, pilgrim travel assumed a great importance. Emperor Ashoka the Great, travelled a great deal in his eagerness to spread doctrines of Buddha. Ashoka and his entourage first travelled to Nepal starting from Patliputra and then ventured to Lumbini Gardens, the land of Buddha's birth on to Kapilvastu, the place where Buddha spent his childhood. From here he went to Sarnath, where Buddha spent many years of his life and finally to Gaya, where Buddha got enlightenment. Through his travels, Emperor Ashoka had special Memorials set up at each spot and also rest houses where travellers could rest.

Harsha was another emperor who was greatly influenced by the Buddhist scriptures. He built institutions and Dharamshalas for the travellers. Rest houses were built in towns and villages. Numerous monasteries and temples were also built for the pilgrims.

The powerful influences of a crusading religion that slowly penetrated a foreign land, such as Christianity in Europe and later in America and Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism in Asia took place to permit

an assimilation and perpetuation of very distinctive languages, literature, art, architecture, philosophy and forms of government. Religion thus played and continues to play a crucial part in travel.

Perhaps the earliest travellers from distant lands to the Indian soil were the trading Persians. Evidence of caravans of Persians visiting India lies engraved in the inscriptions dating to the Persian king Darius. During the rule of the Guptas, there was free access to the ports along the Western Coast, seaborne commerce with Europe through Egypt was yet another reason for travel in and around the country. There are also references of many known Persians, who visited the Indian soil for commerce and trade. There is also a mention of cultural exchanges between Persia and India. Reference has also been made to the influence of Persian customs in the court of Chandragupta Maurya.

Great travellers from various far away lands visited India. Probably the greatest traveller remembered from the distant past is Hieun-tsang. A devout Chinese Buddhist, he made the perilous journey to India around A.D. 633. His main mission was to collect and translate ancient Buddhist scriptures. Some other travellers whose names need special mention are Alexander the Great, Marco Polo, Benjamin of Tudela, Ibn Batutah, Francisco Friar, Alfonso D' Albuquerque and Mark Twain.

One of the important developments during this period was the emergence of some sort of communication system and accommodation. Development of trade and commerce necessitated this development. Shulgi, the ruler of ancient Babylonia, claimed to have built roads and

rest houses at various places for wayfarers. With trade and commerce forming a link in development, it was inevitable that some sort of communication system connecting the centres of trade, commerce and learning were found to be in good shape. When Alexander the Great, during his journeys, reached India, he found well maintained roads covered with shady trees. Along one royal highway, 1920 kilometres long and about 19 metres wide, people, travelled in chariots, palanquins, bullock carts, on horses, camels and elephants.

The great travellers who ventured to explore distant lands had fascinating accounts of their travels. Even if we go back just a few hundred years to the third century A.D., since the first exploration of Alexander the Great, or only about seven hundred years since Marco Polo, and their amazing explorations crossing many lands, we get fascinating accounts of travels of these great persons.

Marco Polo, the fearless traveller, spent almost twenty-five years in Asia during the latter part of the 13th century. His wanderlust could well have been inherited from his father. Young Marco Polo left Venice in the year 1271 with his father and uncle. The three together travelled through Persia and Afghanistan to the "roof of the world", the then unknown Pamir Plateau. After crossing the wind-swept Gobi desert, they reached Kublai Khan's place and remained in China for over twenty years. On his way back home, he stopped in Sumatra, Java, India and Ceylon.

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The concept of pleasure travel as it existed in the west can be associated with the Roman empire. Romans probably were the first pleasure travellers. Travel received a great stimulus from the good communication system and security of the Roman empire. There existed a fine network of roads and new roads were built increasingly wherever the Romans went. Travel literature was published extensively giving routes, the names of the major roads, distances between places and time required in travelling to them. The Romans were able to travel over a hundred or more miles in a day using relays of horses. They journeyed primarily to see famous temples in the Mediterranean areas, particularly the monuments and the famous pyramids of Egypt. The Romans also

travelled during holiday occasions, particularly the famous Olympic Games.

The fall of the Roman empire in the fifth century was a great setback for pleasure travel in Europe. During the Dark Ages only the very adventurous and brave persons would travel. A trip in this period in history was considered dangerous. No one would associate travel with pleasure. Also with the decline of the Roman empire came a sharp decline in trade and commerce. In the absence of a prosperous community with the incentive to travel for pleasure, travelling ceased to exist for its own sake.

The Renaissance marked the next important stage in the history of travel. The reappearance of tourism in Europe follows the Italian Renaissance and the development of a full scale urban system and network of roads. By the end of the fifteenth century Italy itself became the object of attention. At this time Italy was Europe's economic and cultural leader.

The introduction of Annual Holiday in Europe was yet another important landmark which enabled many people to undertake travel in large numbers during the eighteenth century. The annual holidays was the forerunner to the 'paid holiday' which later on was responsible for an extraordinary growth of tourism during the twentieth century. The term holiday derives from holidays associated with religious observances. In the present day parlance it is used generally in a secular sense meaning a

respite from the routine of daily workday life and a time for leisure, recreation and amusement.

The early part of the nineteenth century witnessed a great technological development, first in England, and later on in Europe and America. This development had a profound effect on transport which resulted in the growth of travel in general. This great technological development led to the advent of the railway. The introduction of railways in the nineteenth century was a crucial landmark in history.

The first rail link between Liverpool and Manchester was started in the year 1830. The newly completed railway track in England featured special provisions for carrying passengers in addition to freight. Later on, an extensive programme of construction of railroads to provide trunk lines between major centres of population and commerce and industry was taken up in England. Although the railway network in the beginning was responsible for carrying goods from industrial centres to the centres of trade and commerce, it had, however, initiated the process of carrying the passengers which later on was to become a mass movement. Railways provided the necessary vehicle for the movement of the people from the place of their residence to newly formed and expanding pleasure spots like seaside resorts. These resorts for the first time were within the reach of many people who but for the introduction of railways would otherwise not have been able to reach them.

The shipping, like the railways, made a significant contribution to travel during the nineteenth century. While railways were responsible for inland travel, especially in Europe, the steamship crossed the boundaries and made strides in intercontinental travel. The shipping technology made a number of innovations in the nineteenth century.

The second half of the nineteenth century, in fact, witnessed the growth of travel as a result of development of industrialised societies.

The Industrial Revolution was responsible for changes both in the economic as well as social systems prevailing at that time. A large number of factory towns, both big and small, sprang up which in turn necessitated large scale migrations from the countryside to towns and cities. The Industrial Revolution was responsible for the emergence of the working class which was needed to run factories. In the beginning the working class was burdened with long working hours and poor working and living conditions and lower wages. The sudden concentration of population in towns and cities created unhealthy conditions. For a large number of workers there was little relief from the routine of putting long hours of work in difficult and unhealthy working conditions.

By the turn of the twentieth century all the main characteristics of modern tourism were evident in embryo. Changes in mental attitudes towards pleasure seeking, the recognised value of travel for education, increase in material wealth coupled with social prestige, a growing need to find relief from working routine, improvements in passenger transport

systems- all these factors produced a fertile ground for the development of excursion traffic on a large scale.'

World War I was responsible for a temporary halt to tourist movements. Tourism has always flourished in peace as it is a peace time activity.

The post-war period also brought about attitudinal changes which were destined to influence the volume and nature of tourism. For example, the war was responsible for breaking down international barriers, resulting in the fostering of an ideal, optimistic, peaceful internationalism - just the climate in which tourism is likely to flourish the most.

The unprecedented boom in tourist movements in the twenties, especially in Europe and America, can be directly linked to the introduction of the private motor car. The motorised private and public road transport and the improved road conditions led to a tremendous growth of travel. The invention of the private motor car and coach received its first great impetus in the ten years which preceded World War I. The motor car revolutionised holiday habits of the Europeans and Americans. It became increasingly important in the pursuit of leisure and tourism. The provision of good motor roads and the road services were important factors in the development of both domestic and international tourism.

The post-Second World War period brought in a rapid development of tourism. As the world began to settle down after the years of readjustments immediately after the war ended in the year 1945, there has been a remarkably rapid increase in both domestic as well as international tourism. The United Nations reported that in the ten years period between 1955 and 1965, the number of tourist arrivals in some sixty five countries increased three folds around 51 millions to over 157 millions. This trend in the growth of international tourism continued till the mid 1960s. It continued to be determined by the living standards in the developed countries. The widespread introduction of the holiday with pay to a large majority of people during this period was yet another important factor responsible for growth of tourist traffic.

The late twentieth century period can thus be termed as a period which is responsible for introducing a phenomenon called 'mass tourism'. Although the enormous expansion of tourism has taken place primarily in the advanced industrialised countries, where tourism has become a part of the lifestyle and consumption pattern, it has also shown its might in the developing countries as well.

The most dramatic event which introduced an entirely new dimension of speed, comfort and efficiency to air transport and brought mass travel to its present level was the advent of the jet travel in the year 1958. As a result of the entry of advanced jet aircraft in the civil aviation industry, air travel from the year 1960 onwards grew tremendously. Great

advances have been made ever since in the aircraft jet technology with the introduction of newer and sophisticated planes having emphasis on comfort, luxury, speed and safety. New wide body jets such as Boeing 747, the McDonnell - Douglas DC 10, the Airbus A 300, the Lockheed Tristar L-1011 and the latest all computerised 'fly by wire' Airbus A 320 are all part of the response to the requirements of the ever growing travel market. Added to all this, the technical brilliance of the supersonic aircraft like the Concorde and of the Tupolev 144 have added glamour to the passenger aircraft industry. It will not be out of place to mention here that the international tourism as we know it today, has been largely shaped by air travel.

In order to prepare schemes relating to the development of tourism and to execute them, the Directorate of Tourism was established in the year 1972 of which the Director General is an I.A.S. officer. In 1974 the Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation was established to look after the commercial activities which are a part of development of tourism. Its Managing Director is also an I.A.S. Officer. In addition the Food Craft Institute, Aligarh, which was under the control of Government of India, and later transferred to the Department of Tourism on 1-7-1985, providing training of subjects relating to tourism. In order to give training to students regarding the tourism and travel trade, a Tourism Management Institute has also been established in Lucknow Which in now name MKITM. The Tourism Development Policy has been framed

in Uttar Pradesh under which Tourist circuits are being developed in the following manner :-

1. Buddhist Circuit
2. Bundelkhand Circuit
3. Braj (Agra-Mathura)Circuit
4. Awadh Circuit
5. Vindhya- Varanasi Circuit
6. Water Cruise
7. Wild Life -Eco Advanture Circuit

Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India, is known for its Heritage, Culture and bounties of Nature. It is home to some of the greatest monuments, the most ancient city in the world, the seat of Buddhism and the colours of all faiths.

Uttar Pradesh is a favourite destination for both foreign and domestic tourists. It is common destination for a quarter of all foreign tourists to India and all domestic tourists within India.

It is the land that gave a new meaning to etiquette and continues to redefine the true meaning of love. There is this and much more to Uttar Pradesh.

The history of Uttar Pradesh is very much associated with the broad history of India. It dates back to 4000 years. Formerly the area of Uttar Pradesh was occupied by Aryans or the Dasas and their main occupation was agriculture. The Aryans through conquests occupied the

adjoining areas. They laid the foundations of its civilisation in the region. During the Aryan inhabitation in the region that epics of Mahabharata, Ramayana, Brahmanas and Puranas were written. The state was the heart of Mahabharata war. The Kosala Kingdom of Ayodhya is said to have been incarnated in the city of Mathura.

It was sometime around the middle of the 1st millennium BC that Uttar Pradesh saw the advent of Lord Buddha and the spread of Buddhism. Around the time Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon at Dhamek Stupa in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh was under the Magadh rule. The Chaukhandi Stupa here marks the spot where Lord Buddha met his disciples. Besides Kuru, Panchalas, Vatsas, and Videhas etc. formed the early region of the state. These regions were known as Madhyadesa. During Ashoka's rule, several public welfare works were taken up. During the rule of Magadha Empire, Buddhism and Jainism developed into this region. It was a period of administrative and economic advancement.

The power was subsequently shifted to the Nanda dynasty and then to the Mauryas. However the city reached its pinnacle of glory during the reign of Harshavardhana. The historical background of Uttar Pradesh has a lot to do with the advent of the Muslim rule. The period witnessed the subjugation of the Rajputs whose power was confined to a few pockets of Rajasthan. Uttar Pradesh reached the peak of prosperity during the Mughal rule, and particularly during the rule of Emperor Akbar.

In due course of time, Uttar Pradesh witnessed the decadence of Mughal rule and the advent of the British. The Mughal influence was restricted to the Doab region.

The British East India Company came into contact with the Awadh rulers during the reign of third Nawab of Awadh. There is no doubt that the history of Uttar Pradesh has run concurrently with the history of the country during and after the British rule, but it is also well-known that the contribution of the people of the state in the national freedom movement had been significant. Uttar Pradesh also played a key role in the 1857. From the rule of Rama to the rule of British, Uttar Pradesh has seen it all.

The area has undergone several name changes and territorial demarcations since the early 19th century, i.e., after the British East India Company had established its supremacy in the Gangetic plains. In 1833 the then Bengal Presidency of the Company was divided into two parts, one of which became Presidency of Agra; in 1836 the Agra area was named North-Western Provinces and placed under a Lieutenant Governor by the Company. In 1877, the two provinces of Agra and Oudh (Oudh was occupied by the Company, in 1858), were placed under one Colonial administrator of the British Crown; he was called Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Chief Commissioner of Oudh. In 1902 the name was changed to United Provinces of Agra and Oudh with Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh as administrator; in 1921 Lieutenant Governorship was elevated to

Governorship and the name of the province was changed to United Provinces of British India. On April 1, 1937, the name was shortened to United Provinces. On independence from the British colonial rule in 1947, the princely states of Rampur, Banares and Tehri-Garwal were merged into the United Provinces. In 1950, the name of United Provinces was changed to Uttar Pradesh. In 1999 a separate Himalayan state, Uttaranchal, (now named Uttarakhand), was carved out of Uttar Pradesh.

Pre-Independence

Archeological finds in Uttar Pradesh confirm presence of Stone Age *homo sapiens* hunter-gatherers in Chhatarpalia, Mahugarh, Parisdhia, Lalitpur, Nihi and Gopipur, between 85 ± 11 and 72 ± 8 kyr (thousand years ago) before present (BP); Middle Paleolithic and later the Upper Paleolithic artifacts dated at 21–31 kyr BP;^[8] Mesolithic/Microlithic hunter-gatherer's settlement, near Pratapgarh, around 10550–9550 CE; villages, domesticated cattle, sheep or goats and evidence of plants and agriculture as early as 6000 CE – although, most dates range between c. 4000 and 1500 CE – thus initiating a sequence which extends into the Iron Age, beginning from Indus Valley Civilization and Harappa Culture finds in the Saharanpur division through the Vedic period.

The ancient Mahajanapada era kingdom of Kosala in Ayodhya – where, according to Hindu legend, the divine king Rama of the Ramayana epic reigned – was located here. Krishna – another divine king

of Hindu legend, who plays a key role in the Mahabharata epic and is revered as the eighth reincarnation (Avatar) of Hindu god Vishnu – was born in the city of Mathura. The aftermath of Mahabharata war is believed to have taken place in the area between the Doab region of Western Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, (in what was Kuru Mahajanapada), during the reign of the Pandava king Yudhishtira. The kingdom of the Kurus corresponds to the Black and Red Ware and Painted Gray Ware culture and the beginning of the Iron Age in Northwestern India, around 1000 BCE. The revered Swaminarayan – mentioned in the Brahma Purana and Vishwaksena Samhita as the manifestation of God – was born in the village of Chhapaiya.

Most of the empire building invasions of North India, from the east as well as the west, passed through the vast swathe of Gangetic plains of what today is Uttar Pradesh. Control over this region was of vital importance to the power and stability of all of India's major empires, including the Mauryan (320–200 BCE), Kushan (100–250 CE) and Gupta (350–600 CE) Rajput (650–1036 CE) empires. Mathura in Uttar Pradesh served as the capital of the Kushan Empire.

Following the Hun invasions that broke Guptas' empire, the Ganges-Yamuna Doab saw the rise of Kannauj. During the reign of Harshavardhana (590–647 CE), the Kannauj empire was at its zenith; spanning from Punjab and Gujarat to Bengal and Orissa – and parts of central India, north of the Narmada River – it encompassed the entire

Indo-Gangetic plain. A patron of Buddhism and the University at Nalanda, Harsha organized theological debates and also patronised art and literature. A noted author on his own merit, he wrote three Sanskrit plays. Many communities in various parts of India boast of being descendants of migrants from Kannauj, reflecting its glory in the past.^[14] Soon after Harshavardhana's death, his empire disintegrated into many kingdoms, to be invaded and ruled mostly by Rajputs, who also challenged Bengal's mighty Pala Empire's control of the region.

Agra and Fatehpur Sikri in Uttar Pradesh were the capital cities of Akbar the Great.

The fall of the post-Harshavardhana Rajput kings of north India came when the Turko-Afghan Muslim rulers moved into present day Uttar Pradesh. Much of the state formed part of the various Indo-Islamic empires (Sultanates) after 1000 CE and was ruled from their capital, Delhi.

Later, in Mughal times, U.P. became the heartland of their vast empire; they called the place *Hindustan*, which is used to this day as the name for India in several languages. Mughal rulers Babur and Humayun had their capital in Delhi. In 1540 an Afghan, Sher Shah Suri, took the reigns of U.P. after defeating Humayun, the Mughal king, who ran away to Kabul. Sher Shah's son, Islam Shah, ruled Uttar Pradesh from their capital at Gwalior. After the death of Islam Shah, his prime minister

Hemu became the *de facto* ruler of U.P., Bihar, MP and western parts of Bengal. Hemu had won in all 22 battles spanning entire North India. He defeated Emperor Akbar's forces at Agra and Delhi and established *Hindu Raj* (which lasted one month) in U.P. on 7 October 1556. He was bestowed the title of *Vikramaditya* at his coronation or *Rajyabhishake* at Purana Quila in Delhi and was titled as *Samrat Hem Chandra Vikramaditya*. Hemu died in the Second Battle of Panipat, and U.P. came under Emperor Akbar's rule. Agra and Fatehpur Sikri were the capitals of Emperor Akbar. At its zenith, the Mughal Empire covered almost the entire Indian subcontinent (including present day Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh), which was ruled at different times from Delhi, Agra and Allahabad.

When the Mughal Empire disintegrated, their last territory remained confined to the Doab region of Hindustan and Delhi. Other areas of Hindustan (U.P.) were now ruled by different rulers: Awadh was ruled by the Nawabs of Awadh, Rohilkhand by Afghans, Bundelkhand by the Marathas and Benaras by its own king, while Nepal controlled Kumaon-Garhwal as a part of Greater Nepal. The state's capital city of Lucknow was established by the Muslim Nawabs of Awadh in the 18th century.

Starting from Bengal in the later half of the 18th century, a series of battles for North Indian lands finally gave the British East India Company accession over this state's territories – including the territories

of Bundelkhand, Kumaon and Benaras rulers – and the last Mughal territories of Doab and Delhi. When the Company included Ajmer and Jaipur kingdoms in this northern territory, they named it the "North-Western Provinces" (of Agra). Today, the area may seem large compared to several of the Republic of India's present 'mini-states' – no more than the size of earlier 'divisions' of the British era – but at the time it was one of the smallest British provinces. Its capital shifted twice between Agra and Allahabad.

Due to dissatisfaction with British rule, a serious rebellion erupted in various parts of North India; Meerut cantonment's sepoy, Mangal Pandey, is widely credited as its starting point. It came to be known as the Indian Rebellion of 1857. After the revolt failed the British attempted to divide the most rebellious regions by reorganizing the administrative boundaries of the region, splitting the Delhi region from 'NWFP of Agra' and merging it with Punjab, while the Ajmer- Marwar region was merged with Rajputana and Oudh was incorporated into the state. The new state was called the 'North Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh', which in 1902 was renamed as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. It was commonly referred to as the United Provinces or its acronym UP.

In 1920, the capital of the province was shifted from Allahabad to Lucknow. The high court continued to be at Allahabad, but a bench was established at Lucknow. Allahabad continues to be an important administrative base of today's Uttar Pradesh and has several

administrative headquarters.

Uttar Pradesh continued to be central to Indian politics and was especially important in modern Indian history as a hotbed of both the Indian Independence Movement and the Pakistan Movement. Nationally known figures such as Jawaharlal Nehru were among the leaders of the movement in UP. The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) was formed at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress on 11 April 1936 with the legendary nationalist Swami Sahajanand Saraswati elected as its first President, in order to address the long standing grievances of the peasantry and mobilise them against the zamindari landlords' attacks on their occupancy rights, thus sparking the Farmers' movement in India.

During the Quit India Movement of 1942, Ballia district overthrew the colonial authority and installed an independent administration under Chittu Pandey. Ballia became known then as Baghi Ballia (Rebel Ballia) for this significant contribution in India's freedom movement.

Post-independence

After independence, the state was renamed Uttar Pradesh ("northern province") by its first chief minister, Govind Ballabh Pant. Pant was well acquainted with and close to Jawaharlal Nehru (the first Prime Minister of free India) and was also popular in the Congress Party. He established such a good reputation in Lucknow that Nehru called him to Delhi, the capital and seat of Central Government of the country, to

make him Home Minister of India in 27 December 1954. He was succeeded by Dr. Sampurnanand, a classicist Sanskrit scholar. Following a political crisis in Uttar Pradesh, initiated by Kamalapati Tripathi and C.B.Gupta, Sampurnanand was asked to resign as CM in 1960 and sent to Rajasthan as the Governor of Rajasthan, paving the way for Gupta and Tripathi to become Chief Ministers.

Sucheta Kripalani served as India's first woman chief minister from October 1963 until March 1967, when a two-month long strike by state employees caused her to step down. After her, Chandra Bhanu Gupta assumed the office of Chief Minister with Laxmi Raman Acharya as Finance Minister, but the government lasted for only two years due to the confusion and chaos which ended only with the defection of Charan Singh from the Congress with a small set of legislators. He set up a party called the Jana Congress, which formed the first non-Congress government in U.P. and ruled for over a year.

Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna was chief minister for Congress Party government for part of the 1970s. He was dismissed by the Central Government headed by Indira Gandhi, along with several other non-Congress chief ministers, shortly after the imposition of the widely unpopular Emergency, when Narain Dutt Tewari – later chief minister of Uttarakhand – became chief minister. The Congress Party lost heavily in 1977 elections, following the lifting of the Emergency, but romped back to power in 1980, when Mrs. Gandhi handpicked the man who would

later become her son's principal opposition, V.P. Singh, to become Chief Minister.

Uttar Pradesh shares an international border with Nepal and is bounded by the Indian states of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar. The state can be divided into two distinct hypsographical regions.

The larger Gangetic Plain region is in the north: it includes the Ganges-Yamuna Doab, the Ghaghra plains, the Ganges plains and the Terai. It has highly fertile alluvial soils and flat topography (slope 2 m/km) broken by numerous ponds, lakes and rivers.

The smaller Vindhya Hills and Plateau region is in the south: it is characterised by hard rock strata and varied topography of hills, plains, valleys and plateau; limited availability of water makes the region relatively arid.

The main tourist centres of U.P. Tourism Development Corporation are as follows:

AGRA

Agra is crowned with the glory of the unparalleled Taj Mahal, a sheer poetry in marble with which Mughal architecture reached its zenith. The splendour of the mausoleums, the fort and the palaces is a vivid reminder of the opulence of the Mughal empire, of which Agra was the capital in the 15th and early 17th centuries. While Agra's significance as a political centre ended with the transfer of the capital to Delhi in 1634 by

Shah Jahan, its architectural wealth has secured the city's place on the international map. The nearness of Lord Krishna's land, the Braj Bhoomi, certainly doubles Agra's importance and attraction. The city of Taj is known for its superb inlay work on marble and soapstone by craftsmen who are descendants of those who worked under the Mughals. The city is also famous for its carpets, gold threads embroidery and later articles.

ALLAHABAD

Allahabad is one of the prominent and sacred cities of India. Described with great reverence in ancient scriptures as Prayag or Teerthraj, i.e. 'the holiest pilgrimage centre', Allahabad is situated at the confluence of India's holiest rivers the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. The Sangam, as the confluence of the three rivers is called, is the venue of many sacred fairs and rituals and attracts thousands of pilgrims throughout the year. With the irresistible attraction of Kumbh Mela, hailed as the world's largest congregation of devotees, the glory of the city has certainly doubled. Emperor Akbar visited Prayag in 1575 and founded a new city by the name of Illahabas, which later came to be known as Allahabad. The city was an important cantonment during the British period when it functioned as the capital of the state and has some beautiful architectural remnants of that era. The university at Allahabad has the reputation of being the foremost centre of learning. Allahabad was also the nerve centre of activities during the Freedom Movement and played a leading role in development of Hindi literature.

AYODHYA

Ayodhya, one of the seven most sacred cities of ancient India, is situated on the right bank of the river Saryu, just 7 km from Faizabad.

Ayodhya holds a place of pride among Hindus being the birth place of Lord Rama who was a descendant of the Surya Vansh which is believed to have been founded by Manu, the law-giver of the Hindus.

According to Atharvaveda, Ayodhya was built by gods themselves and was as prosperous as paradise. As per scriptures, Ayodhya had been the capital of Kosaladesh for centuries and was ruled by many illustrious kings, such as Ikshvaku, Prithu, Mandhata, Harishchandra, Sagar, Bhagirath, Raghu, Dileep, Dasharath and Rama under whom the glory of the dynasty reached its zenith. The greatest and largest read epics, the Ramayan and the Shri Ramcharitmanas are the mirror of the glory of Ayodhya.

Ayodhya is an equally important place for Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs. According to legends, five Jain Tirthankaras were born here and the city was visited by Sikh Gurus-Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Govind Singh.

BATESHWAR

70 km away from Agra, Bateshwar is essentially a temple town, situated on the bank of the holy river Yamuna. The name Bateshwar appears to have been derived from Vateshwarnath, one of the many

names of Lord Shiva who is the presiding deity of this pilgrim town. Flanked by the holy Yamuna, Bateshwar has a plethora of temples, once totalling to 101. Out of these 42 temples still stand here. the beauty of this pilgrim town is its long line of Ghats dotted with a series of temples. Some of the temples' ceilings still retain their beautiful original frescos painted with traditional vegetable paints.

The pilgrim town finds references in old scriptures like Ramayan, Mahabharat, Matsya Puran etc. from 8th century to 17th century, it remained an important town under the Gurjar, Chandela and Bhadawar kings. The illustrious King Badan Singh of Bhadawar dynasty shifted his capital from Mai to Bateshwar about 400 years ago. The present temples are said to be constructed by him.

The Jain scriptures too contain description of Bateshwar. According to legends, the 22nd Tirthankar, Lord Neminath, was born here. Presently there are several beautiful Jain temples here.

Bateshwar is also famous for its annual Cattle Fair, which is now almost four centuries old. It is held between Bateshwar and Mai today also at the same site which was earmarked by King Badan Singh for the fair. It is the biggest and the most spectacular cattle fair of northern India.

BITHOOR

Bithoor, described as Brahmavarta in ancient scriptures, lies 22 km from Kanpur, on the road to Kannauj. Situated on the banks of the holy

Ganga, this secluded, tranquil spot is full of religious and historical significance. It is believed that after the destruction of the Universe and its subsequent restoration by Lord Vishnu, Bithoor was chosen by Lord Brahma as his abode. It is also said to be the place where Dhruv, the legendary child who grew up to be revered as the constant Northern star, meditated and acquired divine insight.

However, it is with the famous epic Ramayana that Bithoor is more closely associated and hence also known as Ramale, Saint Valmiki meditated and later wrote the immortal epic here. It is also the birthplace of Lord Rama's sons, Lav and Kush. It was here that they spent their childhood. Later, they were reunited with their father in Bithoor. More recently, Bithoor has been associated with Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi and Nana Saheb Peshwa, who played a key role in the first war of Independence in 1857. They had spent their early childhood in Bithoor where they learnt the skills of warfare.

CHITRAKOOT

Celebrated in ballads and scriptures for its religious importance and close association with the epic Ramayana. Chitrakoot or "The Hill of Many Wonders" is a hallowed centre of pilgrimage. It is believed to be the place where Lord Rama and Sita spent 12 years of their exile and where Sage Atri and Sati Anasuya on the banks of the river Mandakini, also known as the river Payasvini. The river side is lined with Ghats and the town is dotted with temples dedicated to several deities.

CHUNAR

40 km from Varanasi and Mirzapur, Chunar is the place where religion, history and nature intermingle with each other. Situated in the Vindhya ranges on the banks of the holy river Ganga, its scenic and calm atmosphere enchants visitors.

In scriptures Chunar has been referred to as Charanadri, the place from where Lord Vishnu in his Vaman incarnation, took the first step to measure the land of King Bali, for his possession in the age of Satyug. It is also said that a very powerful man had travelled from Himalayas to Kanya Kumari in the Dwapar age. During the journey he took rest here for a while on a rock. This rock which bears the impression of this mythological man, developed later as the present day Chunar. A third story deals with Bhartrihari, the ruler of Ujjain who came here for penance. The fourth story sheds light on a rock idol of Naina Yogini built by King Sahadev, who named the place as Nainagarh.

However, Chunar came into limelight after the visit of Babar followed by Sher Shah Suri, Humayun, Akbar, Aurangzeb and finally, the Britishers.

Chunar is also an important health resort due to its ideal climate.

DEOGARH

Deogarh is situated on the right bank of the Betwa river, at the western end of the Lalitpur range of hills.

Deogarh is of great antiquarian, epigraphical and archaeological importance. It remained in glory during the rule of the Guptas, the Gurjara-Pratiharas, the Gondas, the Muslim rulers of Delhi, the Marathas and the British. Here one finds the remains of a magnificent Lord Vishnu Temple dating back to the Gupta period and several Jain temples. The architecture and sculptures of these temples display a high level of craftsmanship.

DEWA SHARIF

Situated 25 km from Lucknow and 13 km from Barabanki, the small town of Dwa is a famous pilgrim centre being the seat of great Sufi Saint Haji Waris Ali Ahah, an exponent of universal brotherhood. Haji Waris Ali Shah commanded mystical powers and is revered by members of all communities. His father Qurban Ali Shah too was a Sufi Saint. Devotees from far off places visit their 'Mazars', popularly known as 'Deva Sharif' throughout the year. On the occasion of the annual Urs, a 10-day fair is held in the month of November every year.

FATEHPUR SIKRI

Perched atop a rocky ridge, 37 km west of Agra, Fatehpur Sikri came into being four centuries ago when Emperor Akbar, not yet 28 years of old, set out to build the first planned city in Indo-Islamic architecture. the plan was started with great vigour but abandoned a decade later.

By 1568, Akbar had secured his empire but his only grief was that

he had no son and heir. His search for blessings for the birth of a successor brought him to the Sufi mystic Salim Chishti, who lived in Sikri village. The saint prophesied the birth of three sons and soon Prince Salim, who later became Emperor Jehangir, was born. To express his gratitude Akbar decided to build imperial residences in Simri, which would function as a joint capital with Agra. he also named the new city as Fatehpur Sikri. Akbar was a keen builder and the plan of Fatehpur Skiri reveals an architectural mastermind at work. Researches have established that it was planned on a definite mathematical grid.

The construction of the Jama Masjid marked the actual beginning of the city which came up around it. The palace courts were laid out parallel to the cardinally aligned mosque and the sequential order of the palaces was emphasised by change in level.

Even today its redstone architecture, richly ornamented with carvings and fretwork, is in a perfect state of preservation.

GARHMUKTESHWAR

Situated on the bank of the holy river Ganga, 68 km from Ghaziabad, Garhmukteshwar is a revered pilgrim centre. Also referred to as Khandavi Van and Shiva Vallabhpur because of its being an important centre of the Vallabh cult, Garhmukteshwar has been associated with mythology. It is said that this was the place where King Shivi, an ancestor of Lord Rama, had passed the fourth period of his life as an ascetic. Later, with the help renowned sage Parshuram, he built a temple dedicated to

Lord Shiva. It is also believed that after two Ganas (disciples) of Lord Vishnu, Jai and Vijai, had achieved Mukti (salvation) at Shiva Vallabhpur the place came to be known as Ganamukteshwar. With the time this name changed to the present Garhmukteshwar. It is believed that during Mahabharat period, this place was an important centre of trade and also formed part of the capital of Hastinapur State.

Garhmukteshwar and its twin city, Brij Ghat have more than 100 temples. It is also famous for its big annual fair.

HASTINAPUR

Hastinapur, 100 km from Delhi and 37 km from Meerut, has been a silent witness to the majestic grandeur, royal conflicts and princely anecdotes of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. It was once a centre of power which later became a major cause of conflict leading to the battle of Kurukshetra, immortalised in the epic 'Mahabharata'.

Hastinapur is also a sacred place for the Jain devotees who believe that three Tirthankars, Lord Shantinath, Lord Kunthnath and Lord Arhnath were born here. Their 12 Kalyanaks (congregations) were held at this holy place. The first Tirthankar, Lord Rishabhath, SAage Mallinath, Sage Subrat, Lord Parshwanath and the 24th Tirthankar, Lord Mahavir Swami, also sojourned in Hastinapur.

JAUNPUR

Jaunpur, 58 km from Varanasi, was founded in the 14th century by

Feroz shah Tughlaq to perpetuate the memory of his cousin, Sultan Mohammad, whose real name was Jauna. Later, around 1394 A.D., it became the centre of the independent Sharquie kingdom of Jaunpur, founded by Malik Sarvar. The Sharquie rulers were great patrons of art and architecture and constructed many fine tombs, mosques and madarsas here. Jaunpur was also an important centre of Islamic studies. The city is known today for its jasmine oil, tobacco leaves, raddish and Imarti, a sweetmeal.

JHANSI

Jhansi is the gateway to Bundelkhand. It was a stronghold of the Chandela kings but lost its importance after the eclipse of the dynasty in the 12th century. It rose to prominence again in the 17th century under King Bir Sisngh Judeo of Orchha. However, its greatest claim to fame is its fiery Queen Rani Laxmi Bai, who, along with Jhalkari Bai, Gaus Khan and others, led forces against the British in 1857 and sacrificed her life for the cause of India's independence. Later on, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Pandit Parmanand, Bhagwandas Mahaur etc. led the Freedom Movemebt from here. The doyens of Hindi literature such as Maithilisharan Gupta, Vrindavanlal Verma and Siyaramsharan Gupta belonged to Jhansi. The famous musician Adhikhan, hockey wizard dhyanchand too added glory to this city.

KALINJAR

205 km from Allahabad and 260 km from Jhansi, the ancient fort

of Kalinjar stands today wrapped in history and mythology. Located in the ancient land of Jajakbhukti, the present day Bundelkhand, the old massive fort of Kalinjar had been of strategic importance during medieval times. The fort remained a Chandela stronghold from 9th to 15th centuries and was invincible till 1569 when Akbar finally conquered it and later gifted it to Birbal, one of the 'nine jewels' of his court. From Birbal it went to the legendary Bundela king, Chhatrasal and thence to Hardev Shah of Panna before being captured by the British in 1812.

The township of Kalinjar was once protected by ramparts pierced by four gateways, only three of which exist today Kamta Dwar, Panna Dwar and Rewa Dwar, Dotted with remnants of the past, this historic fort is well worth a visit.

KANPUR

Kanpur, situated on the bank of the holy river Ganga, is an important industrial centre of Uttar Pradesh and is known for its historical and religious past. The present Jajmau area is believed to be situated on the mound where the capital of the Pauranic King Yayati existed. The historical city of Kanpur was founded by Hindu Singh of Sachendi Estate and was originally known as Kanhpur. Later, it became a strategic and business centre during the British period and a large garrison was established here. During the war of independence of 1857, afterwards too, Kanpur played an important role in the freedom struggle of India. Great heroes like NanaSaheb, Tatyana Tope, Ajimullah Khan,

Jwala Prasad, Azijan Bai, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi... have been associated with this city.

The propagation of Hindi also owes much to this city as great literateurs like Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Pratap Narayan Mishra, 'Sanehi', 'Naveen', 'Parshad' etc. hailed from Kanpur. Today, it is a flourishing commercial and industrial centre. Besides being an important centre for defence production, it is also an industrial centre as a large number of leather, textile, plastic and other factories are located here.

KAPILVASTU

Today's Piprahwa, 20 km from Siddharthnagar, is identified with ancient Kapilvastu where Lord Buddha spent the early year's of his life. Kapilvastu was the capital of the Shakya clan whose ruler was the father of Lord Buddha, and therefore Lord Buddha is also called as Shakyamuni. The Shakya domain was one of the sixteen independent principalities of the 6th century B.C.

Prince Gautam, as Lord Buddha was then known, left his palace of Kapilvastu at the age of 29 and revisited it 12 years later, after attaining enlightenment.

Today, Kapilvastu comprises of several villages, mainly Piprahwa and Ganvaria. A large Stupa stands at the ancient site which is said to have housed the bone relics of Lord Buddha. The presence of these relics is testified by an ancient Brahmi inscription found at Piprahwa. The ruins of the royal place are spread over a large area.

KAUSHAMBI

60 km from Allahabad, Kaushambi has been an important Buddhist seat. When Lord Buddha traversed widely to convey the message of universal brotherhood and humanity, His sojourn here also glorified Kaushambi. Lord Buddha visited this place in the 6th and 9th year after attaining enlightenment.

It is believed that the legendary Hastinapur was destroyed by the flood of the river Ganga. Thereafter the Chandravanshi kings of the Kuru dynasty made Kaushambi their capital. Twenty-two of their descendants are said to have ruled from here. During the time of Lord Buddha, Kaushambi was the capital of the famous Vatsa kingdom, ruled by King Udayan. It was also known as Kosam, Vatsa Desha etc.

A large number of architectural relics and ruins, sculptures and figurines, coins and other finds highlight the importance of the city during ancient times. The site has also yielded a large number of Punch Marked and cast coins and unique terracotta articles which are preserved in the museum of the Ancient History Department of Allahabad University and Allahabad Museum.

Kaushambi is also an important place for Jain devotees. As per Jain scriptures the sixth Tirthankar, Lord Padma Prabhu, was born here. Besides, Lord Mahavir Swami sojourned and meditated here for a considerable period.

KUSHINAGAR

53 km from Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, one of the principal centres of the Buddhist pilgrimage, is the place where Lord Buddha left his corporeal self and attained Mahaparinirvana.

Kushinagar was previously known as Kushinara, which was the capital of Malla dynasty. It was one of the famous sixteen Mahajanpads of ancient India. The Chinese travellers Fa Hien and Hieun Tsang have also mentioned Kushinara in their travelogues.

The credit for bringing this ancient site to light goes to General A. Cunningham and A.C.L. Carlleyle who, after excavating the site in 1861, established its antiquity for the first time. Later, between 1904 and 1912 several excavations, conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India at Kushinagar confirmed its identity.

The monuments of Kushinagar are clustered in three distinct groups comprising the main site at the Nirvana Temple, the central Stupa and surrounding monasteries, the Mathakuar Kot to the south-west and the Ramabhar Stupa, a kilometer to the east.

LUCKNOW

Situated on the banks of the river Gomti, Lucknow the capital of Uttar Pradesh, is regarded as one of the finest cities of India. Being the principal centre of the erstwhile Awadh province, Lucknow had prospered under the Nawabs. This 'golden city of east' abounds with

majestic monuments and buildings which speak of its glorious past. The city has been the home of a galaxy of luminaries of Hindu-Urdu literature and exponents of dance and music. Even while keeping pace with modern developments, Lucknow has preserved its golden past and its sublime culture- the Lucknawi Tehzib.

Apart from this, the Luckhnawi cuisine and fascinating 'Chikankari' or exquisite shadow work embroidery on fine muslin cloth, are renowned worldwide.

MATHURA–VRINDAVAN

Mathura, traditionally recognised as the capital of Braj Bhoomi, is the land where Lord Krishna was born and spent his youth. The region is richly interwoven with the legend of Lord Krishna, kept alive today by millions of devotees who look upon him as the most endearing incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Situated on the bank of the river Yamuna, Mathura had assumed great significance during the Mauryan era. It also received great stimulus under Emperor Ashoka. Later, under the Kushans, it became a centre of trade and learning and was practically their southern capital for two centuries. The city's strategic location at the cross roads of various trade routes made it the meeting point of varied cultures. It was here that the Buddhist Sculptural art took birth and developed to its zenith.

The twin city of Vrindavan, 15 km away, is integral to the legend of Lord Krishna. This is the place where Lord Krishna played his flute

and performed his Leelas. The town was later immortalised in the poems of Surdas, Raskhan, Meerabai and other great poets. Vrindavan is one of the most important religious centres of Braj Bhoomi, where famous saint Vallabhacharyaji, master of Indian classical music, Swami Haridas lived Chaitanya Mahaprabhu too visited Braj. Braj Bhoomi includes, apart from Mathura and Vrindavan, places like Gokul, Barsana, Govardhan, nandgaon, Radhakund, Baldeo, Mahavan etc. Braj Bhoomi is not only famous for its temples. Ghats and Ashrams, but also for its traditional Charkula dance and the Rasleela.

NAMISHARANYA

Namisharanya, 95 km. from Lucknow is regarded as one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage. According to legends. Lord Brahma had himself indicated that Naimisharanya would be the most sacred place for meditation in Kaliyug for saints and sages. References to naimisharanya are found in the Mahabharat, Shri Ram Charitmanas and other holy scriptures. It was here that Saint Shounik narrated the popular Shri Satya Narayan Katha to a congregation of sages and hermits.

SANKISA

200 km. from Agra and 45 km from Farrukhabad, Sankisa is one of the important Buddhist sites. It is believed that Lord Buddha descended at Sankisa after giving sermon to his mother in heaven. Famous chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang and others have mentioned about Sankisa in their travelogues.

SARDHANA

22 km west of Meerut, lies the fascinating town of Sardhana with a romantic and historical past. It was established in the late 18th century by the French adventurer Walter Reinhardt, popularly known as 'Samru'. He came to India in 175 as a private soldier in the French East India Company. The Jagir of the present day Sardhana was awarded to him as a reward for his services by Najub Khan of Bengal. Reinhardt had played an important role in defeating Rohilla chief Zabta Khan of Saharanpur. After his death in 1778, he was succeeded by his widow Begum Yohanna Samru who built the imposing building of the Roman Catholic Church at Sardhana.

SARNATH

Sarnath, 10 km. from Varanasi, is one of the most revered Buddhist pilgrim centres. It was here that Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon, sanctified as Maha Dharma Chakra Pravartan (Set in Motion the Wheel of law), after attaining Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya (Bihar). It is notable that for his death, Lord Buddha had named Sarnath along with Lumbini (Nepal), Bodh Gaya (Bihar) and Kushinagar as the four places he thought to be sacred to his followers.

Emperor Ashoka who spread Lord Buddha's message of love and compassion throughout his vast empire and in other countries, visited Sarnath around 234 B.C. and erected a Stupa here. Several Buddhist structures were raised at Sarnath between the 3rd century B.C. and the

11th century A.D. Today, Sarnath treasures the most expansive ruins amongst places on the Buddhist trail.

SRAVASTI

Sravasti, capital of the ancient Kosala kingdom, is a sacred site for Buddhists because it is here that Lord Buddha performed the greatest of his miracles to confound the Tirthika heretics. These miracles include Buddha creating multiple images of himself, which has been a favourite theme of Buddhist art.

Sravasti was an important centre of Buddhism even in Buddha's lifetime as the Enlightened One spent many monsoons here and delivered important sermons. It was here that Anathaindaka, a wealthy merchant, built a large monastery in the garden of Prince Jeta, son of King Prasenjit, for the reception of Lord Buddha. Later, several shrines and other monasteries were built at this sacred spot.

Sravasti has been identified with the remains at Saheth-Maheth villages, situated on the banks of the river Rapti. Several inscriptions confirm their identity with Sravasti. The remains unearthed here testify that Sravasti was a flourishing town during the Gupta period.

SHUKRATAL

Shukratal is a place of great religious and historical importance. According to mythology, about 5000 years ago, sage Shukdev, had recited the Shrimadbhagwat for seven days, to King Parikshit, the grand son of Arjun.

VARANASI

Varanasi, called "Kashi" in the scriptures, is said to be the oldest living city in the world with a history that goes back to some three thousand years. Varanasi is believed to be the greatest 'Tirth' or crossing place between the earth and heaven. For a Hindu, to visit Varanasi and bathe in the waters of the Ganges, is to be cleansed of the sins of thousands of past rebirths. The combination of Kashi the holy city. Ganga the celestial river and Shiva the supreme god, makes varanasi an immortal destination. Mark Twain, the American writer, complimented this Heritage City in the words: *"Benaras is older than history, older than tradition, even older than legend and looks twice as old as all of them put together."*

Varanasi has always been a great cultural centre, notably in the field of learning, especially of religion, philosophy, Yoga, Ayurveda and Astrology. This city has produced some of the greatest litterateurs and freedom fighters. The galaxy of luminaries include Swamy Ramanand, Kabirdas, Ravidas, Tulsidas, Panditraj Jagannath, Bhartendu Harishchand, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and many others. Some of the most renowned exponents of classical music and dance hail from Varanasi. Banarasi silk sarees and brocades are cherished as collector's item.

VINDHYACHAL

Vindhyachal, 8 km from Mirzapur, on the bank of the holy river Ganga, is one of the most revered shaktipeeths of which the presiding deity is Devi Vindhyavasini. Closely related with mythology and referred prominently in ancient scriptures, Vindhyavasini Devi is believed to be the instant bestower of benediction. The Goddess is also known as 'Kajala Devi' a name presumably derived from the famous folk song "kajali" of this region. There are several temples of other deities in the vicinity, especially the Ashtabhuj Devi Temple and the Kalikhoh Temple, which constitute the Trikona Parikrama (circumambulation).

HARIDWAR

Haridwar is one of the seven most holy Hindu places in India, with Varanasi usually considered as the holiest. A paradise for nature lovers, Haridwar presents a kaleidoscope of Indian culture and civilization. In the scriptures it has been variously mentioned as Kapilsthan, Gangadwar and Mayapuri. It is also an entry point to the Char Dham (the four main centers of pilgrimage in Uttarakhand viz, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri), hence, Shaivaites and Vaishnavites call this place Hardwar and Haridwar respectively, corresponding to Har being Shiv and Hari being Vishnu.