Chapter - 4

Tourism Circuits in Uttar Pradesh
Chapter-4

Tourism Circuits in Uttar Pradesh

Introduction

In the preceding Chapter-3 a bird's eye view, though in some detail, has been presented of tourism in Uttar Pradesh drawing attention to the states tourism potential, trend, policy approach and development problems.

As already stated Uttar Pradesh is the largest state in India both areawise and populationwise. From the point of view of effective tourist development in the states administrative convenience as also needs of regional development, it was imperative to adopt a regional approach. Accordingly, the survey of the course of tourist development has been presented Circuit wise in this Chapter of the thesis. Each Circuit has its own features and attractions.

The nine 'Thurst Circuits' identified are : (1) Buddhist Circuit (2) Bundelkhand Circuit (3) Braj (Agra-Mathura) Circuit (4) Awadh Circuit (5) Vindhya Circuit (6) Water Cruise

The source of reference of this chapter are indicated in detail in the Bibliography appended at the end of the thesis.

166
Circuit (7) Jain Shrines Circuit (8) Sikh Panth Circuit and (9) Eco-tourism Circuit. Details of each Circuit are spelt out in the succeeding pages beginning with the Buddhist Circuit.

The detailed descriptions presented are for the benefit of both the domestic foreign tourist and serve as an illuminating guide. The account could enlighten the foreign tourist to satisfy his curiosity, for instance he has certainly heard of Buddha. The text makes it a point to draw attention to facts and places of likely interest of the tourists, whether, domestic or foreign.

**Buddhist Circuit**

Uttar Pradesh is dotted with monuments and relics, legends and history extolling the virtues of this ancient religion of Buddhism. At Piprahwa (old Kapilvastu), Buddha spent his youth in palaces and riches as Prince Siddhartha. At Sarnath he preached his first sermon and it was at Sravasti and Kaushambi he preached regularly. It is claimed that Sankisa Buddha descended from Heaven along with Brahma and Devraj Indra at Kushinagar where he finally attained 'Mahaparinirvana'.

167
Kushinagar

History and Importance

'Kushinara' was the ancient name of Kushinagar during the Buddha period. It was the tribal capital of 'Mallas' and was one of the sixteen 'Mahajanapadas' of ancient India. Once, Lord Buddha said, "Anand! Don't call it to be a small town. Previously it was a very fascinating and prosperous town. I have died here six times and it is the seventh time, when I am going to pass away here." When Lord Buddha turned 80, he had predicted on 'Magh Purnima' day (as per the Indian calendar) at Vaishali that exactly after three months, he would pass away. On this given date, he arrived at Kushinagar in 543 BC; preached his last sermon and in the last hour of the night, he attained 'Mahaparinirvana'. He asked his closest disciple Ananda to inform the 'Mallas', who had gathered in large numbers to attend his last sermon – "Now, O Brothers, I do remind you, all component things are subject to decay. Work for your salvation in the right earnest."

His dead body was laid in state for six days; cremation was done on the seventh day by his disciple Mahakashyap at Mukutbandhan (present Ramabhar) Stupa. After cremation, the 'ashes' were divided into 8 parts. 'Mallas' constructed a big
Stupa over the ashes, where Buddha had passed away. They also constructed another Stupa at the cremation place. Later, Ashoka, the Great, had also renovated and constructed Stupas here. The Chinese travellers, Fa Hien and Hieun Tsang have also mentioned 'Kushinara' in their travelogues. Kushinara continued to be a living shrine till the 12th century AD and was thereafter lost into oblivion.

In modern times, Dr. Hamilton of the East India Company discovered the ruins in 1811-12 AD but had no idea about them. In 1861-62 AD, Lord Cunningham visited Kushinagar and later, his assistant, Mr. Carlleyle carried out extensive excavations and exposed the main Stupa and also discovered a 6.10 m long statue of a reclining Buddha in 1876. Ven. Chandra Swami, a Burmese monk, came to India in 1903, got possession of the 'Mahaparinirvana' temple and made it into a living shrine.

The Main Stupa

The Stupa was excavated and completely exposed by Carlleyle in 1876. It was then a huge mass of brick work in a tottering condition, representing the core of what must once have been a grand structure, which, inclusive of its pinnacle, may once have reached the height of nearly 45.72 m. The
operation revealed, at the top of the filling, some carved bricks and a copper coin of King Jayagupta, below which, at a depth of nearly 4.27 m, was discovered a small circular brick chamber, containing a copper plate which was the text of the Nidana Sutra in Sanskrit and concluded with the statement that the plate had been deposited in the Nirvana-Chaitya by one Haribala, who also installed the great Nirvana statue of Buddha in the temple front. The vessel was found to contain some silver coins of Kumargupta, a Gupta emperor of the 5th century AD. In 1927, the Stupa was restored completely out of donations of U Po Kyu and U Po Hlaing of Burma. Inside its drum a small chamber, representing a miniature replica of the original Stupa, was constructed at a height of 6.10 m above the ground level. On the 18th of March, 1927, this chamber was ceremoniously closed, in the presence of 16 Buddhist priests headed by Rev. U Chandra Swami, with numerous objects of gold, silver and copper, and a copper plate inscription was deposited inside recording the facts and circumstances of the discovery and identification of the monument and the site by the A.S.I.
The Nirvana Temple

The temple stands on the same plinth as the main Stupa behind it. The ruins of this temple and the reclining Nirvana statue inside were discovered by Carlleyle in 1876 AD. The statue measure 6.10 m in length and is executed out of one block of sandstone of mixed reddish colour probably from Chunar. It represents the sleeping Buddha reclining on his right side with his face turned towards the west. It is placed on a large brick pedestal with stone posts at the corners. The western side of the pedestal facing the entrance bears sculptures representing three human figures, each carved in the shallow niche cut into a solid block of stone. The figure to the extreme left represents a female in mourning with long hair and crouching forward in grief with her hands resting on the ground. The figure to the extreme right is indistinct, but may represent male or female also in grief, as indicated by the head resting on the right hand.

The central figure represents a man sitting cross-legged with back turned towards the spectators. Right below him is an inscription datable to the fifth century AD recording that 'the statue was the appropriate religious gift of the Mahavihara Swami Haribala'.
In May, 1955, a committee was appointed by the Government of India for the improvement of sites connected with the life of Buddha for the ensuing 2500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations. As a result thereof the present temple was constructed in 1956. Visiting Hours: 06.00 to 17.00 hrs.

The Cremation Stupa (Ramabhar)

It is the site of the Cremation Stupa or the 'Mukutbandhanchaitya' of Buddhist tradition. Lord Buddha was cremated here. This site is about 1.5 km east of the Main Temple on the Kushinagar-Deoria Road. In 1910, excavation attempts were made by Hirananda Shastri. He exposed eastern parts of the mound and discovered that it represented an unusually large Stupa with a huge circular drum, 34.14 m in diameter, resting on a circular plinth, consisting of two or more terraces, and 47.24 m in diameter at the base. Hundreds of clay seals, with the usual Buddhist formulae inscribed on them were found in the excavation. From the archaeological study it is evident that this monument had undergone changes by repairs and renovations. In 1956, the entire basement of the Stupa was exposed.
There seems to be no doubt that, like the Main Stupa, this monument also commanded great sanctity and was likewise surrounded by subsidiary monuments such as minor Stupas or shrines, partly revealed in the excavation of a small portion of the area close to its south-east. Touching its basement was found a building of large bricks, representing an expansive rectangular hall of uncertain purpose and resting on a plinth of smaller bricks. The other excavated ruins represented the usual minor Stupas raised by pilgrims from time to time.

The Matha-Kuar Shrine

Very near to the Main Temple, is the Matha Kuar Shrine, wherein a colossal statue of Buddha is installed, locally called Matha-Kuar. The statue measures 3.05 m in height and is carved out of one block of the blue stone of the Gaya region to represent Buddha seated under the Bodhi-Tree in a pose known as the 'Bhumisparsh Mudra' (earth touching attitude). On the base of the statue an inscription, much effaced and thus not completely readable but otherwise datable to the 10th or 11th century AD. The statue was broken into two pieces and was repaired and restored to its original shape in 1927. This shrine is not an independent structure but forms part of a much larger
building, representing a monastery which measured 34.75 m externally. It consisted of a central open court surrounded by corridors on all the four sides, which in turn faced the usual row of rooms. It is believed that after cremation of Buddha the ashes-relics were distributed into 8 parts here itself.

**Ruins and Brick Structures**

They are located around the Nirvana Temple and the Main Stupa. The ruins are of different sizes and are the remains of monasteries and structures raised from time to time in the ancient period.

**Meditation Park**

A Meditation Park has been developed behind Main Nirvana plantation of saal trees. It had been undertaken to provide a natural feeling of Buddhist ambience.

**Indo-Japan-Sri Lankan Temple**

Built recently, it is marvel of Buddhist architectural grandeur of modern times.
Museum

This museum belongs to the Department of Culture, Uttar Pradesh Government, and is very near to the Main Temple. The museum galleries are full of ancient items like seals, statues, potteries of Buddha period. Visiting Hours: 10.00 to 17.00 hrs.

Other Temples


Pawanagar (Fazil Nagar)

It is about 22 km east of Kushinagar on National Highway No.28. It is believed that Lord Buddha, while going to Kushinagar from Vaishali, stopped here to accept meals from one of his disciples, 'Chund'. Here, he ate mushrooms and developed dysentery which caused his death at Kushinagar. It is also believed that the 24th Tirthankar of the Jain sect, Swami Mahavir Jain also passed away at this place. A Jain Temple, memorial and park are there at Pawanagar.
Sun Temple

This temple is in Turkpatti which is about 17 km away. Here, excavations were carried out in 1981 in which a statue of the Sun God was discovered of yellow stone. It is believed to be 1600 years old. Another statue, 0.87 m long of the Sun God was also discovered of blue stone which is said to be 1200 years old.

Festivals

Every year on the date of Buddha Purnima (April/May), a three-day Buddha Festival is organised, which is a great attraction for the visiting tourists.

Miscellaneous Information

Gorakhpur is a convenient base for visiting Kushinagar (51km); Kapilavastu (148km); Lumbini (Nepal 175km) and Sarnath (Varanasi 266 km). There are very good trains and bus connections from Gorakhpur for almost all major cities of India. Taxis are conveniently available here for excursions.

In case one is interested in having peace and tranquillity to forget all the miseries and monotony of life, this is the only
place where you get all. The air smells of the celestial spirit and is surrounded with bliss. So take a trip to Kushinagar and feel the difference.

**Kapilvastu**

Identified today with ancient Kapilvastu, modern Piprahwa lies at a distance of 29 km from Siddharthnagar. Kapilvastu was the ancient capital of the Sakya clan whose ruler was the father of the Buddha, for which reason the Buddha is also referred to as the Sakamuni. The Sakya domain was one of the sixteen independent principalities of the 6th century BC.

Prince Gautam, as the Buddha was then known, left his palace in Kapilvastu at the age of 29, and revisited it 12 years later, long after he had attained enlightenment.

Today, Kapilvastu comprises of several villages, chief among them being Piprahwa and Ganvaria. A large stupa stands at the ancient site which is said to have housed the bone relics of the Buddha. The presence of these relics are testified by an ancient Brahmi inscription discovered at Piprahwa. The ruins of the palace are spread over a large area. Other places of interest are:

**Stupa**

This is the main archaeological site which was discovered during excavations in 1973-74. The seals and inscriptions over the lid of a pot read "Om Deoputra Vihare Kapilvastu Bhikshu Mahasanghasa" and "Om Deoputra Vihare Kapilvastu Bhikshu
Sanghasa". The title Deoputra refers to Kanishka, a great patron of Buddhism who built the biggest Vihare at Piprahwa and renovated the main stupa here.

Sarnath

The Buddha came to this hamlet, 10 kms. North-East of Varanasi, to preach his message of the 'middle way' to nirvana after he achieved enlightenment at Bodhgaya. Later, the great Buddhist emperor Ashoka erected magnificent stupas and monasteries here.

Sarnath was at its peak when the indefatigable Chinese traveller Fa- Hien visited the site early in the 5th century AD. When Hiuen Tsang, another Chinese traveller, dropped by in 640 AD, Sarnath had 1500 priests, a stupa nearly 100 m high. Ashoka's mighty stone pillar and many other wonders. The city was known as the Deer Park, after the Buddha's famous first sermon. 'The Sermon in the Deer Park.'

Soon after, Buddhism went into decline and when Muslim invaders destroyed and desecrated the city's buildings. Sarnath became little more than a shell. It was not until 1836 when British archaeologists started excavations that Sarnath regained some of its past glory. It's now a major Buddhist centre.

Most of Sarnath's monuments are set in landscaped gardens, making it a pleasant place to spend half a day. During the Buddha Purnima Festival in May, Sarnath celebrates the birth of the Buddha with a big fair and a procession. Although you may; be able to arrange to stay in some of Sarnath's
monasteries, you'd be better off going to Bodhgaya or Dharamsala if you are interested in studying Buddhism.

**Sravasti**

Sravasti, capital of the ancient Kosala Kingdom is sacred to 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, and have been among the favourite themes of Buddhist art.

Sravasti was an active centre of Buddhism even in the Buddha's lifetime. The Buddha himself spent many summers here, and delivered important sermons. It was here that Anathapindaka built, in the garden of Prince Jeta, a large monastery for the reception of the Buddha. Later, several shrines and other monasteries arose at this sacred spot. Sravasti has been identified with the remains at Saheth-Maheth on the borders of the Gonda and Bahraich districts. It is situated on the banks of the River Rapti. Several inscriptions confirm this. The remains unearthed testify to the flourishing condition of this sacred spot in the Gupta period.

**Maheth**

This covers an area of about 400 acres, and has been identified with the remains of the city proper. Excavations have exposed the massive gates of the city, ramparts and also the ruins of other structures, which testify to the prosperity of
ancient Sravasti. The Sobhanath Temple is located here. Pakki Kuti and Kacchi Kuti were probably Buddhist shrines before they were converted into Brahmanical temples.

**Saheth**

Saheth, covers an area of 32 acres, and lies about a quarter of a mile to the South-West of Maheth. This was the site of the Jetavana monastery. This area was sanctified by the Buddha's association. It become an important place of pilgrimage, adorned with numerous shrines, stupas and monasteries. The stupas belong mostly to the Kushana period, while the temples are in the Gupta style. The remains date from the Mauryan era (3rd century BC) to the 12th century AD, when Buddhism was waning in India. One of the earliest stupas, probably dating to the 3rd century BC contained relics of the Buddha. A colossal statue of the Buddha was also found and may now be seen in the Indian Museum, Kolkata. The Emperor Ashoka visited Jetavana, and the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang mentions two Ashokan pillars at Sravasti.

**Devi Patan Temple**

One of the most important Shaktipeeth in the entire region, it is revered by Hindus especially from Nepal.
Gorakhpur

Most travellers happily pass straight through Gorakhpur on their way to or from Nepal. This is hardly surprising since the city is infamous for its annual plagues of flies and mosquitoes and even the local tourist office candidly tells visitors 'there are no sight' in the Gorakhpur'. The city is, however, the headquarters of the North Eastern Railway and is a useful rail junction.

Gorakhpur is named after the Sage Yogi Gorakhnath. The temple that bears his name is a couple of kilometres north-west of the city centre and is worth visiting if you have time to fill in between transport connections. The city is also home to well-known Hindu religious publishers Geeta Press. A visit to their office will result in a pile of invaluable English language books being offered to you with titles like 'How to lead a household life'. These make excellent presents to friends back home with a sense of humour.

Siddharth Nagar

In Naugarh tehsil of Siddharth Nagar district Piprahwa is identified through recent excavations, with Kapilavastu, the capital of the Sakya clan and the seat of Suddhodana's capital. This was the place where the Buddha spent his childhood grappling with the overwhelming and puzzling problem of human existence, of sufferings, diseases, old age pain and death. It was here that he decided to renounce the sensual pleasures of life, the power of the ruler, the comfort and
security of family life to take up the mendicant's bowl in his quest for enlightenment.

Azamgarh

There are not many places of tourist interest for the religious or otherwise, but still few of them attract the people to visit them.

Mau

There are not many places of tourist interest or for the religious purpose or otherwise, but still few of them attract the people to visit them. The larger fort in the district is that of Ghosi, built by Raja Ghos. Traditions also give some support to the belief that the district was included in the ancient kingdom of Ayodhya. Maunath Bhanjan, an important centre of hand woven, cotton textiles in Uttar Pradesh is also visited by a large number of tourists. Pakri Pewa tal situated at a distance of about four miles from Ghosi, the tehsil headquarters, is a picnic spot in this district.

Deoria

It is 21 kms. from the tehsil headquarters and 124 kms. from Allahabad. Many of the archeological remains have been found in Deoria and the adjoining village Bhita which is situated on a high mound, about 450 m. in length. The excavations of 1910-11 and 1911-12 say the place as a site of prehistoric settlement. To the South-West are the remains of a great square fort. The remains of seals of ivory, bronze, stone
and sealings of clay, coins of Kushan emperors and of Avanti, Kausambi and Ayodhya kingdoms, copper and earthenwares, vessels, terracotta statuettes and figurines in the dress of the time, personal jewellery and ornaments and stone implements have been recovered from the excavations made here.
The romance of Bundelkhand is still alive today. Rugged forts and palaces- the legacy of its chequered past, echo with tales of valour and chivalry and bear a silent testimony to the resplendence of an era long gone by.

Bundelkhand, which emerged from the mists of history during the rule of the mighty Chandelas in the 9th century AD, governed the destiny of Central India for nearly three hundred years. The Bundelas who came to power six centuries later were also to command influence in this region. Bir Singh Ju Deo (1605-1627 AD), a favourite of the Mughal Emperor Jehangir, was a powerful ruler. Centuries later during the turmoil of 1857, Bundelkhand produced another charismatic leader, the young, valiant Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi- who led her troops into war against the might of the British.

The area once known as Bundelkhand is today identified with the districts of Jhansi, Lalitpur, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Banda and Mahoba in Uttar Pradesh, Sagar, Chattarpur, Tikamgarh, Panna and Damoh in Madhya Pradesh and parts of Gwalior, Datia, Shivpuri and Chanderi.

Bundelkhand is certainly worth a visit today, for it has much to offer- magnificent monuments, ancient religious sites, little hill retreats hidden treasures waiting to be explored- ideal for a unique holiday of discovery and fun.

For a tourist the convenient itinerary for Bundelkhand begins from Delhi, from where one can start for Gwalior.
proceeding to Jhansi - Orchha - Khajuraho - Mahoba - Kalinjar - Chitrakoot - Allahabad and back to Delhi. From Jhansi one can also choose the alternate route Jhansi - Matatila - Mahoba - Lalitpur - Deogarh - Chanderi - Datia - Sonagiri - Gwalior and Delhi.

From eastern India one can start from Kolkata go via Varanasi and Allahabad, stepping into Bundelkhand through Chitrakoot moving on to Mahoba - Khajuraho - Jhansi - Gwalior - Delhi and back to Kolkata. From western India, starting from Bombay, a convenient itinerary would be Bhopal - Deogarh - Lalitpur - Jhansi - Orchha - Khajuraho - Mahoba - Chitrakoot - Allahabad and back to Bombay.

For visitors from the South, Bhopal - easily accessible from Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore or Thiruvananthapuram - would be the ideal start for a visit to this area. An interesting route to choose would be via Bhopal to Deogarh - Lalitpur - Jhansi - Orchha - Khajuraho - Mahoba - Chitrakoot - Jhansi and back.

Jhansi

Jhansi is a major transport hub for the north of Madhya Pradesh (MP) and is the most popular transit point for Khajuraho. Though it is actually in Uttar Pradesh.

The walled city and the headquarters of district and the Division of the same name, revives memories of that heroic young Rani Lakshmi Bai, who led her force into battle against the British imperialism during 1857-58. The city was founded by Raja Bir Singh Deo who built its fort on a rocky hill in 1613.
A.D. It is very well connected with rails and roads from all sides. The present township of Jhansi extends beyond the old wall which has ten gates and four Khirkis (entrances).

Places of tourist interest in Jhansi city are Rani Mahal; Jhansi Fort and Government Garden. Rani Mahal, the residence of Rani Lakshmi Bai, with a good collection of exquisite sculptures of ninth to twelfth century has been turned into a museum by Archaeological Survey of India. It remains open from 8.00 am. to 5.00 am. Jhansi Fort, is another place of interest. It belonged to the great Rani Lakshmi Bai. It remains open for public on Sundays from 8 am. to 5 pm. without any entrance fee. Government Garden, Narain Bagh and Rani Lakshmi Bai park are the other places which attract the visitors to the place.

**Around Jhansi**

**Barua Sagar**

24 km from Jhansi, on the route to Khajuraho, Baruasagar is the historic spot where the battle between the Peshwa's troops and the Bundelas was fought in 1744. This is where Joti Bhuau, the elder brother of Maharaja Madhuji Scindia was killed.

The place is named after the Baruasagar Tal, a large lake formed about 260 years ago, when an embankment was erected by Raja Udit Singh of Orchha. A fine, old fort built by him, picturesquely situated on an eminence, commands an excellent view of the lake and the surrounding landscape.

To the north-east of the lake are ruins of two old Chandela temples. Built of granite, the older one is known as
Ghughua Math. Nearby is the later Gupta period temple known as Jarai-ka-Math. It is dedicated to Shiva and Parvati. The eastern side of its shikhara is lavishly ornamented with massive stone sculpture.

Parichha

Parichha Dam, built on the River Betwa, is about 25 km from Jhansi on the Jhansi-Kanpur National Highway No.25. Its reservoir - a placid stretch of water that runs to Notghat bridge, 34 km away, is ideal for water sports. The whole area is rich in scenic beauty, surrounded as it is with farmland and unbroken stretches of woods. Water sports are a popular feature during the weak-long celebration of the Jhansi Festival held in February-March every year. Parichha with its large water body and idyllic surroundings holds the promise of an unforgettable holiday, not only for adventure seekers and anglers but also for picnickers.

Todi-Fatehpur

The fort covering an area of 5 acres, is built on a hillock and is surrounded by three massive stone walls. It is divided into 4 main parts- the oldest and the uppermost being Gusain Mahal, the next being 'Ranwas', the third, Rajgarh Palace and the fourth the Rangmahal Palace, which is a splendid four storeyed building embellished with paintings on the walls and ceilings.
**Samthar**

Samthar lies at a distance of 66 km from Jhansi and 13 km from Moth. Formerly called Samshergarh it is now known as Samthar. It was an independent principality under the great Gujar warriors of the 17th and 18th centuries. Chandrabhan Bar Gujar and his grandson Madan Singh, governors of the state of Datia, and credited with the creation of the independent state of Samthar.

**Deogarh**

Just 23 km from Jhansi, Deogarh lying in the present district of Lalitpur, is of great antiquarian, epigraphical and archaeological importance, and has figured in the history of the Guptas, the Gurjara-Pratiharas, the Gondas, the Muslim rulers of Delhi, of Kalpi, the Marathas and the British.

Deogarh is situated on the right bank of the Betwa, at the western end of the Lalitpur range of hills. The cliffs immediately overhanging the bank rise to a height of 300 feet and form a long steep ridge of red sandstone. The river takes a deep curve to the west at this juncture and passes through the extremely picturesque country side. The water of the river is deep green here and a small island clad in rich verdure, located in the middle of the river, lends an added charm to the site. It is an ideal and virgin location for shooting of films.
Amroha which is the headquarters town of the tehsil is famous for mangoes and a particular type of fish whereas Sambhal has an extensive mound, the ruins of buildings. It gives a site of an ancient place known as Kot. On the ruined wall of this Kot there still hangs a 'pat' (a big size grinnstone) which is said to have been tossed by Malkhan (cousin of Alha and Udal). This in fact shows the strength of Malkhan and is a worthseeing place. The Vishnu temple at Sambhal which finds its mention in the Ain-e-Akbari is another worthseeing places. It is a celebrated temple of God Vishnu and is one of the 68 "Tirthas" (sacred places of pilgrimage) and 19 bathing places. Other tourist attraction place are:

**Dashavatara Temple**

The fine Vishnu temple at Deogarh belonging to the Gupta period, popularly known as the Dashavatara Temple is the earliest known Panchayatan temple of north India. The terraced basement above the high temple plinth is adorned with a continuous row of sculptured panels. A highly carved doorway with Ganga-Yamuna figures lead to the sanctum or garbhagriha. Three big rathika panels set in the side walls have Vaishanava mythological scenes carved in high relief- the Gajendra moksha panel, Nara-Narayan tapasya and the Anantshayi Vishnu. The Dashavatara Temple at Deogarh is noted for being the first northern Indian temple with a shikhara or spire. Only the lower part of the shikhara remains today.
Around Deogarh

Chanderi

A town that is famous for its gossamer Chanderi saris has also some of the finest examples of Bundela Rajput and Malwa Sultanate architecture. A magnificent Mughal fort dominates the skyline of this interesting old town.

Among the sights here are the Koshak Mahal, an old palace said to have been commissioned by Mahmud Khilji in 1445, the Badal Mahal Gate- a victory arch, the imposing Jama Masjid, the Shahzadi ka Rouza, a building with decorative arches and the Parmeshwar Tal.

Mahoba

Mahoba is the most important town in this district from historical point of view. Mahoba, like other Hindu towns of renown is believed to have existed since the most remote time. In Chand Burdai's poem the town is mentioned as Mahatsa or Mohatsnagar. The town is associated with the history of Chandela who ruled the Bundelkhan. The tank and temple at Rohilla 3 kms. south-west of the city were built by the first king Rohillya. Kakra Maths of Shiva character situated near Madan Sagar, is a place of tourist interest. In the bed of Madan Sagar are the ruins of an old building known as the Summer House of Chandel Kings. The temple of the tutelary deity of the Chandellas stands on the northern bank of the Madan Sagar.

On the top of a hill near Kirat Sagar another remarkable monument of same period is the tomb of Jalhas Khan, an officer
of Jaichand of Kannauj who came to arrest Bramha in his war against Prithviraj and was slain at the passage of Betwa.

Mahoba also boasts of a number of Jain and Buddhist shrines. An account of Mahoba in the Chandela period would not be complete without a mention of its magnificent lakes. To bear the testimony are Kirat Sagar, Madan Sagar, Kalyana Sagar and Vijai Sagar.

**Temples And Other Monuments**

Near Madan Sagar is the famous granite Shiva temple known as Kakramath, built in the Khajuraho style of temple architecture. The Madan Temple dedicated to Vishnu also stands nearby. On an island in the lake stands Majhari, the ruins of another Vishnu temple. Along the northern embankment is an old Chandela fort known as Qila Mismar along with the ruins of Parmal's Palace. The celebrated Maniya Devi Temple, the massive stone pillar known as Deewat or Alha-ki-Gilli and the Dargah of Pir Mubarak Shah, the tomb of a Muslim saint from Arabia, who settled in Mahoba in 1252 AD, also stand in the fort area.

A roofless, granite-pillared baradari, known as Alha's Baithak, stands on the south-east end of the embankment. A tunnel nearby is said to lead to the fort by the side of Madan Sagar. Near the southern end of Madan Sagar are located the temple of Bari Chandrika Devi, the Shiva cave temple of Katheshwar and on the adjoining hillock, 24 rock hewn images of Jain Tirthankaras.
A Sun Temple, among the rare few still to be found in northern India, is located at Rahila Sagar. Though in a ruined state, it is still an excellent example of Chandela architecture. It is also a marvellous film locale.

Kunds

Besides the tanks, Mahoba has two famous Chandela period kunds (pools) lined with granite slabs in a reverse pyramid shape. Ram Kund is located to the west of Madan Sagar, while Suraj Kund is near Rahila Sagar. Both originally served as havan kunds (pits for sacrificial fires) for the great yajnas performed by the mighty Chandela rulers.

The Gorakhgiri Hill

The hill where Guru Gorakhnath resided with his disciple Sidho Dipak Nath is dramatic with massive granite rocks, perched atop one another in a wild and striking manner. A huge, carved Gajantak Shiva figure in the foothills can also be seen. The spot is ideal for picnics and climbing excursions.

Chitrakoot

Chitrakoot, the celebrated pilgrimage town is 6 km south of Karvi and 72 km south-east of Banda district on the road to Allahabad.

A tranquil retreat, it is located on the northern spur of the Vindhyas. Chitrakoot, 'the hill of many wonders' is a gift of nature and the gods. A city with more than legendary significance, it was the abode of Lord Ram and Sita for eleven
years when in exile, the place where Sage Atri and Sati Anasuya meditated, the divine spot which saw the incarnations of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. This holy city, the abode of the gods, is set in sylvian surroundings on the beautiful River Mandakini. It is dotted with innumerable temples and shrines today.

**Gupt Godavari**

19 km from Chitrakoot, the Gupt-Godavari is a tiny rivulet flowing into the tanks at the end of an underground cave. It is believed that Lord Ram and his brother Lakshman held court in the cave, which has two natural throne-like rocks.

**Sati Anasuya**

13 km from Chitrakoot, the Sati Anasuya Ashram is located further upstream. It was here that Atri Muni, his wife Anasuya and their three sons (the three incarnations of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh) are said to have meditated. The Mandakini is believed to have been created by Anasuya through her meditation. A winding road through densely wooded hills leads to the spot.

**Sphatik Shila**

This unique and most picturesque spot is located on a huge rock. It is said that Lord Ram and Sita used to sit here and enjoy the scenic beauty of the place.
Janaki Kund

3 km from Chitrakoot, this cave over the Mandakini has always astounded visitors. It is said that Sita took her bath at this spot during her stay at Chitrakoot.

Hanuman Dhara

Located on a steep hillside, it is approachable by a flight of 360 steps. Here, the waters of a spring tumble over an image of the Lord Hanuman.

Kamadgiri

2 km away from Chitrakoot, lies Kamadgiri- a place of prime religious significance. A forested hill- it is skirted all along its base by a chain of temples and is revered even today as the holy embodiment of Ram. The Bharat Milap Temple is located here, marking the spot where Bharat is said to have met Ram, to persuade him to return to the throne of Ayodhya. Many worshippers even today perform the holy parikrama, the ritual circuit of the sacred hill, to ask for a boon or a blessing.

Ram Ghat

One km from the city, the ghats that line the banks of the River Mandakini reveal ongoing religious activity. Here, amidst hymns and the sweet fragrance of incense, holy men in saffron robes sit in silent meditation or offer the solace of their wisdom to the countless pilgrims who converge here. With the very first rays of the sun that gleam upon the river, Ram Ghat stirs into life. Devotees of all ages take the ritual purifying dip in the
waters and invoke the blessings of the gods. The activity builds up to a crescendo of colour and to spontaneous expressions of faith through the day. The evening 'Arti' at Ram Ghat is a unique experience for the devotee as well as for the tourist.

Around Chitrakoot

Sitapur
Located on the left bank of Paisuni, Sitapur is intimately connected with both Chitrakoot and the sacred hill of Kamtanath, which is just 2 km to the south west of the town. Pilgrims first bathe in the Paisuni River at Sitapur and then move on to do the parikrama of Kamtanath. Originally the town was known as Jaisinghpur. In 1739 AD, Aman Singh, Raja of Panna gave Jaisinghpur to Mahant Charan Das, who changed its name to Sitapur in honour of Sita.

Ganesh Bagh
Located 11 km from Chitrakoot, on the Karvi-Devangana road, near the Banki Siddhapur village, is Ganesh Bagh. Here an exquisitely carved Shiva temple, ruins of a residential palace and a seven storeyed baoli built during the reign of the Peshwa Vinayak Rao, stand in mute testimony to the splendid forms of art and architecture that once flourished in this area.

Rajapur
Just 38 km from Chitrakoot, is the village where Swami Tulsidas, the illustrious poet of Ram Charit Manas, was born.
Bharat Koop

18 km from Chitrakoot lies Bharat Koop believed to contain the holy waters of the sacred rivers brought by the younger brother Bharat, to celebrate the rajyabhishek (coronation) ceremony of Lord Ram.

Kalpi

Situated at a distance of about 35 km east of Orai, between Jhansi and Kanpur on the National Highway 25, Kalpi is linked by metalled roads with Jalaun, Hamirpur and Rath.

Kalpi is believed to have been originally founded by Kalib Dev, a ruler of the area in ancient times. One of the eight great forts of the Chandelas, the earliest authentic mention of Kalpi is found in the annals of its capture by Qutb-ud-din Aibak in 1196. After this Kalpi saw long days of struggle for its possession— not only by the Sarqi kings of Jaunpur, but also by the successive rulers— Daulat Khan Lodhi, Hoshang Shah of Malwa, Behlol Lodhi and Babar. Under Akbar, Kalpi became the 'gate of the west' and the starting point for expeditions to Central India. In the 17th century, the famous Bundela chief Chhatrasal made Kalpi his stronghold. Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi also held possession of the fort for some time. Finally it fell into the hands of the British in 1857.

The principal remains at Kalpi are the tombs of Madar Sahib, Ghafur Zanjani, Chol Bibi and Bahadur Shahid and the great enclosure commonly known as the Chaurasi Gumbaz, attributed to the Lodhis.
The Chaurasi Gumbaz is built of blocks of rubble set in lime mortar. The whole building is divided into square spaces, rather like a chess board, by eight lines of pillars that are linked by arches and topped by a flat roof. The rather dilapidated structure has a lifty dome that rises to a height of 60 feet. Its architectural style and stucco ornamentation clearly reveal its Lodhi origin.

Around Kalpi

Rampura

59 km from Jalaun, Rampura was once a small principality under the Kachhwaha Rajputs of Jalaun and their ruler Raja Ram Singh. The fortified palace of Rampura which is about 350 years old, is a massive handsome structure, well worth a visit.

Jagmanpur

9 kms from Rampura, Jagmanpur, once the headquarters of the Sengar Rajput clan under Raja Rup Shah, also houses a large masonry fort. The confluence of five rivers nearby, known as the 'Panch Nada' is an added attraction for the tourist.

The two forts can be visited with due permission from the owners.

Kalinjar

280 km from Jhansi, this town and the fort, which have had strategic importance since the earliest of times, are located in the ancient land of Jejakbhukti which is an integral part of
Bundelkhan. The fort, a stronghold of the Chandelas from the 9th to the 15th century AD, remained an invincible citadel, prized for its location, right up to the time of the Mughals.

During its eventful career, the fort was subject to numerous attacks and Mohammed Ghazni, Qutb-ud-din Aibak and Humayun, all invaded this stronghold of the Chandelas. It was Akbar who finally conquered it in 1569 and bequeathed it as a gift to Birbal, one of his 'nine jewels'. From Birbal it went to Chhatrasal, the legendary Bundela warrior and then to Hardev Shah of Panna. In 1812 it fell into the hands of the British. This fort with its romantic and extraordinary history is well worth a visit.

The township of Kalinjar was also once enclosed within a high rampart wall with four gateways, only three of which exist today. These are popularly known as the Kamta Dwar, Panna Dwar and Rewa Dwar.

**Kalinjir Fort**

Situated on a high hillock in the Vindhyan ranges, the fort was approached through seven gates or check posts before entering the main fort area. These splendid gateways are the Alam Darwaza or Alamgir Darwaza, Ganesh Dwar, Chandi or Chauburji Darwaza, Budha Bhadra Darwaza, Hanuman Dwar, Lal Darwaza and Bara Darwaza. Within the fort are the remains of two palaces, the Raja Mahal and Rani Mahal.

Among places of interest within the main fort area are Sita Sej, a small cave containing a stonebed and pillow for use of hermits; Patal Ganga the reservoir cut in rock; Pandu-kund,
where water trickles from the horizontal rock strata's crevices; Bhairon-ki-Jharia, with the colossal figure of Bhairon carved on the rock face - more popularly known as Manduk Bhairav and Mrigdhara or 'antelope's spring- a small pool in the inner chamber of the rampart, where reflected figures can be seen under trickling water. Koti Tirth and the Budha-Budhi Taal - said to possess great healing powers, are among the important pilgrim centres at Kalinjar. Other places of interest are the Nilkanth Temple built by Chandela ruler Parmardideva, with the rock-cut Swarga Rohan Kund, where in a niche stands the colossal 18 armed, 17 feet broad and 24 feet high figure of Kal-Bhairav, ornamented with a garland of skulls. The Vankhandeshwar Mahadev Temple located at the source of the Shivasari Ganga is also well worth a visit.

As a whole, the Bundelkhand region deserves to be visited at least once, to experience the distinctive features of the Chandelas and the sculptures of their times. One may not know that the whole of Khajuraho sculpture was chiselled in Deogarh from where they were transported to the present site. Though communication is a problem in certain areas, yet it is worth the trouble to visit these places. It is understood that the Uttar Pradesh, Tourism is in the process of starting conducted tours of these places for the convenience of the tourists. A joint venture by M.P. and Uttar Pradesh. Tourism in this sector could bolster tourism in this area. The best season is from September to March. Do not forget to carry a mosquito net or repellant, torch, candles and adequate film rolls to shoot at site.
Banda

Banda is the district headquarters. The places of tourist interest include Nawab Ali Bahadur's palace and other buildings in an open place. There is a beautiful tank on the road to Kalinjar. It is large sheet of water and is surrounded on all four sides by masonry tanks or flights of step leading to the water's edge. Beyond Nimmi Nullah lie the ruins of the well built fort and palace. The temples of Bameshwari Devi and Bameshwar Mahadeo are the oldest and the most celebrated temples of the town. The latter temple is said to have been set up by Rishi Bamdeo.

Lalitpur

It is the headquarters of the district situated on the Jhansi-Bombay section of the Central Railway. It is 56 miles to the south of Jhansi city connected with a metalled road which is national highway running from Jhansi to Sagar (in Madhya Pradesh). Other metalled roads connect it with Mahroni, Mandaura, Banpur, Deogarh and Tikamgarh (in Madhya Pradesh).

It is said to have been founded by Sumer Singh, Raja of south India, who named it after his wife Lalita. A tank in which he is said to have bathed and cured of the skin disease from which he was suffering, still bears his name. There are a few archaeological remains at Lalitpur, foremost being a small building known as Bansa which is said to have been Octroi office of the Muslim rulers. It has an inscription bearing the name of Firoz Shah Tuglaq, Samvat 1415 (A.D. 1358).
Lalitpur is well-known for its industries, the principal ones being the tanning of hides, sawing, shoe making, ironware, bone, metal and soap manufactures.

**Rajapur**

This township is associated with the great saint, poet Tulsidas, the writer of Ramcharitmanas who is said to have come to this place during the reign of Akbar and devoted himself to prayer and meditation. His house is still in existence in the town and contains a shrine and an old multilated manuscript of Ayodhya Kand of Ramcharitmanas. Recently a temple has been built here. A fair lasting for about ten days is held in Vaisakha and another in Kartika. The place is about 88 kms. from Banda and 29 kms. from Karwi.

**State Museum**

The Museum has collections of terracotta, bronzes, sculptures, arms, manuscripts, paintings and coins of gold, silver and copper. Closed on Mondays and second Sundays of every month. Visiting hour: 6th April to 30th June: -7.30 to 12.30 hrs., 1st July to 15th April: 10.30 to 16.30 hrs.

**Braj (Agra - Mathura ) Circuit**

It generated 2 million years ago when the Himalayas hunched out of the Tethys Sea and rose, towering, into the sky. At the southern feet of this mighty range, a broad valley sloped.
Melting snows from the high mountains poured into this valley and coursed through it in great rivers. Seasonal rains made the rivers flood every year spreading fertile soil, from the mountains, over their banks. When the brown waters receded, grass sprouted and greened these flood plains.

One of the oldest civilizations flourished in the Braj Bhoomi of which rich compliments are available in old scriptures. The Yadav was the dominating clan of this land who claimed descent from the legendary Raja Yadu. Although the capital city of this land, Mathura was a thriving centre of international trade and commerce, the land remained to be called the Braj Bhoomi because of its lush and green fields.

Drawing from such epics, embellished by folklore handed down, reverentially, through many generations, we learn that one of his descendants, Samundra Vijay, was the ruler of one of the two great cities that the Yadavas founded in the fertile plains of the Braj.

**Shoripur - Bateshewar**

Samundra Vijay's city, on the right bank of the sacred Yamuna River, was called Shoripur. This is where one of the major streams of Braj lore begins.

Today, the once glittering metropolis, Shoripur, has been reduced to a village. It is slightly more than 70 kms from Agra and it shares its fame with its neighbour, Bateshwar. In fact, in the eyes of most visitors and pilgrims, Bateshwar is the more important of the two villages.
The most striking feature of Bateshwar is its towering cliffs of clay and its impressive row of white temples strung out along the banks of the slow-flowing Yamuna River. In actual fact they have not been built on the holy stream's banks but atop an artificial embankment, or bund. It is more than likely that the course of the river changed because it threatened to erode the foundations of a brick fort reputedly built by the 17th century ruler, Raja Badan Singh of Bhadawar. The fort's impressive ruins still stand in Bateshwar-Shoripur.

The people of this part of the Braj believe that there are over a hundred temples in this area, most of them dedicated to Lord Shiva. While it is difficult to choose between the many temples, visitors with limited time should make it a point to see the principal temple dedicated to Bateshwar. In this shrine, built by Raja Badan Singh, the idol is shielded by a shimmering metal serpent. There is also the Panchmukheshwar with its five-faced idol, and the Pataleshwar and Jageshwar temples with still discernible paintings on their ceilings. The Pataleshwar also has a lamp-pillar or deepak stambh erected by a Maratha chief to commemorate his fallen warriors. The most ancient temple is that of Ban Khandi Mahadev: it was, reputedly, the first temple to be established in Bateshwar.

Of considerable interest too are the dwellings constructed into the clay cliffs of Bateshwar. Most of them were inhabited by men respected as sages: a tradition that goes back to the uncertain origins of Hinduism.

Restless searches for the meaning of life gave rise to many points of view, and varied lifestyles. The non-violent
faith of Jainism, for instance, relies on the teachings of its Tirthankars, spiritual guides who assist mankind to ford the river of existence. One of these revered, and selfless leaders was born in this place and there are two temples dedicated to him at the southern end of Bateshwar-Shoripur.

According to a document held by the Jains, Prince Aristh was a great grandson of King Shouri. Objecting to meat being served at the reception for his pre-nuptial ceremony, he renounced the world and lived in the jungles of Shoripur. There, on receiving enlightenment, he became Lord Neminath.

It would appear, therefore that this spiritual leader, too was a member of the pastoral clan of the Yadavas. Fittingly, the people of this area renew their links with their ancient heritage during the auspicious month of Kartik (October-November). For fifteen days a great cattle fair is held here and it attracts both buyers and sellers of livestock as well as an increasing number of tourists who like to interact with rural folk in Bateshwar-Shoripur.

Shoripur, as we have said, was one of the two great cities established by the descendants of Raja Yadu. When King Yadu's great-grandson Samundra Vijay reigned in Shoripur, his cousin Ugra Sen, ruled from Mathura. It has, in effect, become the capital city of Braj Bhoomi.

City of Lord

The humanity of Lord Krishna, and his warm and liberal life style, gave birth to a great tapestry of beliefs and traditions
often linked to the places associated with him. Prime among them, quite naturally, is the ancient town of Mathura.

Mathura

Mathura spreads across the right, or western, bank of the Yamuna River. Also on this side of Braj Bhoomi are Vrindavan, Govardhan, Kusum Sarover, Barsana and Nandgaon. Across the river, to the east, are Gokul, Mahavan and Baldeo.

As many of India's riverine towns are, Mathura is defined by its ghats; broad flights of landing steps leading down to the river. And the Yamuna, sister of Yama, god of death, and the daughter of Surya, the sun god, flows through the lives of the people of Mathura, so to say.

Every evening, at the historic Vishram Ghat, the river is worshipped with Aarati, incense and sonorous Sanskrit chants. And then devotees release leaf boats with flickering oil lamps on the dark flowing waters.

One could drift in a row boat out from the arches and stone steps of the landing. The old waterfront, with its many ghats, high walls, pavilions, gnarled trees, browsing cows and temples festooned with bells, will stretch before you. Like a woodcut frozen in time, this has probably remained unchanged from the days when Hiuen Tsang, the 7th century Chinese traveller, journeyed across Braj bhoomi.

Back on Vishram Ghat, where Lord Krishna is said to have rested after killing Kamsa, there is a choice of a number of interesting walls through the narrow lanes that lead away from the river. Tiny open-fronted shops sell bright bangles and
pictures of Lord Krishna in the manner in which he is worshipped in many temples across the land. There are, in fact, a number of popular temples in this labyrinth of streets including those dedicated to Lord Hanuman and Nrisingh, Murli Manohar, Neelkantheshwar, Radha-Damodar and the Mukut Mandir.

The most important temple in Mathura, however, is the Shri Krishna Janambhoomi; the birthplace of Lord Krishna. The old shrine marks the cell in which he was born.

In most temples visitors are not allowed to photograph the idol.

The small prison room, accessed through a corridor, has a bare platform where Lord Krishna is believed to have been born. Idols of various deities stand behind the platform. On the walls above them are pictures depicting Shiva, the Lord of Destruction and his followers; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Brahma, the creator. Also one of Lord Krishna being taken across the river to Gokul, protected by the huge hood of the Divine Snake, Sheshnag.

Leading on from this tiny cell is the resplendent new temple where the main shrine holds beautiful marble idols of Radha and Krishna. There is also an unusual little silver linga-column. Devotees believe that it has been made out of 11.25 kgs. of mercury. As this element is normally liquid at room temperature, it is believed that Indian savants used a secret process to solidify it.

The masonry observatory of Sawai Jai Singh, the Maharaja of Jaipur, was demolished decades ago. It once stood
in the Kans Ka Qila, a fort built atop a hillock by Raja Man Singh of Amber. Though the fort is now in ruins, it is well worth taking the rather steep walk to the top. There is an impressive eagle's eye view of Mathura, and of the sinuous flow of the Yamuna in the distance.

Before the start of the climb to the fort visit the interesting Jama Masjid with its four, tall minarets and colourful mosaics on its facade. It was built in 1661 by Abd-un-Nabi, a governor appointed by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.

But though the Mughals did not contribute much to the artistic heritage of Mathura, the exhibits in the Mathura Museum show that art has been a very important part of the culture of this area from as far back as 400 BC. From that age was unearthed a terracotta Mother Goddess. Here one can also see superb examples of Jain, Buddhist and Brahmanical art. Mathura artists also used Greek motifs and themes and were influenced by Iranian concepts when they evolved their own eclectic styles; distinctive and powerful.

Driving out of the multi-layered heritage of Mathura visitors often notice the marked absence of the old forests, or vans; and also of the famed, lush, grasslands. For instance Vrindavan, just 15 kms away, is associated in legend with the forest where the young Lord Krishna played with Radha and her friends. Centuries of urbanization have, however, wiped out the old woods. Today, all that remains of that sacred jungle is in the walled Nidhi Van. A platform extends on both sides of the entrance overlooking an area filled with scraggy, stunted, trees and infested with tribes of rhesus monkeys.
Be very wary of the monkeys of Vrindavan. They leap on the backs of unsuspecting visitors, snatch their glasses and refuse to surrender them unless they are paid a ransom in food; preferably offered by their local, human, friends! These adroit simians also haunt the Shahji Temple. It was built by a family who was given a noble title by the rulers of Awadh. It now enshrines the idols of Radha and Krishna in an audience chamber glittering with Belgian glass chandeliers.

Two other interesting temples among the many in Vrindavan are the Rangaji Temple, built in 1851, and the Shri Krishna-Balram Temple. The Rangaji Temple has a Rajasthani facade in front of a towering, South Indian Gopuram gate-tower. It also has a gold plated stambha-flagmast, 16 meters tall. The Shri Krishna-Balram temple has been built by the International Society for Krishana Consciousness (ISKON). It's a beautiful, white, fantasy of pillars, domes and arches, as delicate as if it had been created out of spun-sugar and almond icing.

Journeying away from Vrindavan to Govardhan, 26 kms from Mathura, one sees more of the Braj Bhoomi countryside. Most of the green pasture lands have been replaced by thriving farms and fields. Occasionally hillocks and scrub-covered ravines appear. Sometimes there are large water-bodies like the Radha and Krishna Kunds on whose once-wooded banks Radha and Krishna often met. The woods have gone and many of these reservoirs have been enclosed in brick, stone, and mortar to make water harvesting reservoirs. One of them is the great Mansi Ganga. Temples and old mansions rise around it,
boatmen ply across it, and pilgrims carrying water from it hurry through the narrow streets of the bazaar, determined to complete their Chaurasi kos parikrama, or circumambulation, of the major shrines of Braj Bhoomi. The pilgrimage encircles the sandstone ridge of Govardhan which devotees believe Lord Krishna once raised aloft, for a week, to shield his people from a deluge. The peak of Govardhan ridge, or hill, is often regarded to be a sacred black rock enshrined in the Giri Ram Govardhan Dham. Pilgrims bathe this rock with libations of water taken from the Mansi Ganga reservoir.

Another reservoir in this area is the Kusum Sarovar reputedly constructed by the rulers of the former princely state of Bharatpur. The chhataris or cenotaphs, on the far side of the Sarovar are well worth visiting because of their beautiful frescoes. One of these frescoes shows Lord Krishna sitting behind Radha and, lovingly doing her hair.

Clearly, women in those days were accorded a high status in society. At times they were aggressively assertive; a role which is reaffirmed at least once a year in the villages of Barsana and Nandgaon.

Barsana is 50 kms and Nandgaon 56 kms from Mathura, and they are 8.5 kms apart from each other. Both villages cluster around temple dotted hillocks and they hold a special place in the hearts of the devotees of Lord Krishna. Radha came from Barsana. Nandgaon was the home of Lord Krishna's foster father, Nanda. Every year, during the spring festival of Holi, the men of Nandgaon dress in colourful robes, wrap padded turbans on their heads and, carrying padded shields venture into
the streets of Barsana. There, after drum-beating, prayers and chanting, they await the Lath Mar, or beating with Staves, encounter with the women of the host village. The women, meanwhile, have trudged up to the main temple of Barsana atop the hill, carrying 2 meter-long staves. After they have worshipped in the temple, they troop down, assemble in the narrow Rangili Gali, or colourful Alley, where the men are waiting. At the appointed time, the men crouch on the road, their shields above their heads. The women raise their staves and bring them down with fearsome thwacks! on the men's shields. And all the while spectators from the upper floors and terraces of the houses lining the road, throw clouds of coloured powders on everyone below. It is a three-hour frenzy of controlled and kaleidoscopic violence; a great experience for both the spectators and the participants.

The origins of Lath Mar Holi are lost. It could have been a feud between the two villages which was resolved by these yearly, ritualized, fights.

As Barsana and Nandgaon have much to offer visitors during Holi, Gokul, 15 kms from Mathura, is reputed for its festivities celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna at Janmashtami, in August-September. Gokul must, at one time, have been a fortified township. Its wall, and its narrow, winding, Jaisalmer. The temples here were probably built in the 16th and 17th centuries but, though they attract many pilgrims, they are not of significant architectural or artistic merit. Nor is the brick-and-plaster temple of Mathuranath in Mahavan, 18 kms away from Mathura. This was once a Buddhist monastery but now holds a
number of Hindu shrines in its 84-pillared, chaurasi khambha, hall. Marble plaques, commemorating donations made by devotees, decorate the forecourt. Mahavan is associated with Rohini, the mother of Lork Krishna's brother, Balrama, also known as Baldeo. Baldeo is also the name of a hamlet, 20 kms away from Mathura. Here there is a little gem of the temple dedicated to Baldeo and his wife Revati. The road leading to the temple passes number of open-fronted shops which glitter with mounds of sugar-candy as large as rock-crystals. These are misri, the approved offering to Baldeo.

Lord Krishna's elder brother was also, reputedly, responsible for irrigating Braj Bhoomi by making canals and irrigation ditches to bring water from the Yamuna. The legend puts it colourfully by saying that he plunged his plough into the banks of the river and ordered her to follow him. Near the temple is a reservoir called the Kshir Sagar said to have been excavated by Balrama.

Inside the tiled court of the immaculately clean temple you might find a group of musicians and singers on festive days. And, if you're particularly lucky, brightly dressed women devotees will, quite spontaneously, get up and dance with graceful abandon. Their arms and bodies sway with the throb of the drums, cymbals and claps of their men sitting around the musicians. And if you should pluck up the courage to ask them why they are dancing they will probably, say; "Because the Lord danced for joy; and this is the land of the Lord." In fact the beat is so compulsive that visitors join in, warmly
encouraged by the onlookers. It is a wonderful evocation of the irrepressible spirit that still pervades Braj Bhoomi.

**Agra**

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Agra was the capital of India under the Mughals, and its superb monuments date from this era. They include a magnificent fort and the building which many people come to India solely to see— the Taj Mahal. A part from its handful of imposing monuments, there's little to distinguish Agra and any other northern Indian city; it has the usual dense chowk, large cantonment, lots of predatory rickshaw-wallahs and highly polluted air. The Yamuna River, which flows through the city and is the backdrop to the Taj and Agra Fort, has become an open sewar— scientists recently declared it incapable of supporting any life form.

It is a readily possible to make a trip to Agra from Delhi. There is an excellent train service making this eminently practicable. However, Agra is worth more than a flying visit, particularly if you intend to see the nearby deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri. The Taj certainly deserves more than a single visit if you want to appreciate how its appearance changes under different lights. The Taj is undoubtedly the biggest attraction for the foreign tourist.

Badal Singh is credited with building a fort on the site of the present Agra Fort in 1475, but this didn't stop Sikandar Lodhi making his capital on the opposite bank of the Yamuna in 1501. Babur defeated the last Lodi Sultan in 1526 at Panipat, 80 km north of Delhi, and Agra then became the Mughal capital.
The city reached the peak of its magnificence between the mid-16th and mid-17th centuries under the reigns of Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jahan. It was during this period that the fort, Taj Mahal and Agra's major tombs were built. In 1638 Shah Jahan built a new city in Delhi, and Aurangzeb moved the capital there 10 years later.

In 1761 Agra fell to the Jats. It was taken by the Marathas in 1770, before the British wrested control in 1803. There was heavy fighting around the fort during the Mutiny of 1857, and after the British regained control, they shifted the administration of the North Western Provinces to Allahabad. Agra has since developed as an industrial centre.

Agra is on the western bank of the Yamuna River, 204 kms south of Delhi. The old part of the city and the main marketplace (Kinari Bazaar) are north-west of the fort. The spacious British built cantonment is to the south, and the main road running through it is called The Mall, the commercial centre of the Cantonment is Sadar Bazaar.

The labourers and craftsmen who toiled on the Taj set up home immediately south of the mausoleum. This area of congested alleyways is known as Taj Ganj and today it contains most of Agra's budget hotels. The tourist class hotels are predominantly in the area south of it.

Agra's main railway station, Agra Cantonment, is west of Sadar Bazaar. The city's major bus stand, Idgah, is nearby. Agra's airport is seven km west of the city.
**Agra Fort**

Construction of the massive red sandstone Agra Fort on the bank of the Yamuna river was begun by Emperor Akbar in 1565, though additions were made up until the rule of his grandson, Shah Jahan. In Akbar's time the fort was principally a military structure, but during Shah Jahan's reign it had partially become a palace.

The auricular fort's colossal double walls rise over 20 m in height and measure 2 1/2 kms in circumference. They are encircled by a fetid moat and contain a maze of buildings which form a small city within a city. Unfortunately not all buildings are open to visitors, including the white marble Pearl Mosque, regarded by some as the most beautiful mosque in India.

**Anguri Bagh**

The Anguri Bagh or Grape Garden probably never had any grapevines but was simply a small formal Mughal garden. It stood in front of the Khas Mahal.

In front of Jehangir's Palace is the Hauz-i-Jehangri, a huge bowl carved out of a single block of stone. According to one traditional story Jehangir's wife, Nur Jahan, made attar of roses in the bowl; it's also fabled to have been used for preparing bhang. The Amar Singh Gate takes its name from a maharaja of Jodhpur who slew the imperial treasurer in the Diwan-i-Am in 1644 and, in a bid to escape, is said to have ridden his horse over the fort wall near here. Not surprisingly, the unlucky horse did not survive the fall—though it is now immortalized in stone; Amar Singh did not survive Shah Jahan's
wrath. Justice tended to be summary in those days. There is a shaft leading down to the river where those who made themselves unpopular with the great Mughals were hurled without further ado.

Bhita

Excavations at this site on the Yamuna river, 18 km south of Allahabad, have revealed the remains of an ancient fortified city. Layers of occupation dating from the Gupta Period (320-455 AD) back to the Mauryan period (321-184 BC) and perhaps even earlier have been uncovered. There's a museum with stone and metal seals, coins and terracotta statues. It's best to get here from Allahabad by taxi.

Chini Ka Rauza

The squat and smelly Chini Ka Rauza (China Tomb) one km north of the Itimad-Ud-Daulah, is the mausoleum of Afzal Khan, a poet and high official in the court of Shah Jahan. Its exterior was once covered in brightly coloured enameled tiles, but due to years of neglect, the remaining tile work only hints at the building's former glory.

Diwan-E-Aam

The Hall of Public Audiences was built by Shah Jahan and replaced an earlier wooden structure. His predecessors had a hand in the hall's construction, but the throne room, with its
typical inlaid marble work, indisputably bears Shah Jahan's influence. This is where the emperor met officials and listened to petitioners. Beside the Diwan-i-Am is the small Nagina Masjid or Gem Mosque. A door leads from here into the Ladies's Bazaar, where female merchants came to sell goods to the ladies of the Mughals court. No males were allowed to enter the bazaar except Akbar, though according to one apocryphal story he enjoyed visiting in female disguise.

**Diwan-E-Khas**

The Hall of Private Audiences was also built by Shah Jahan, between 1636 and 1637. It's where the emperor received important dignitaries or foreign ambassadors. The hall consists of two rooms connected by three arches. The famous Peacock Throne was kept here before being moved to Delhi by Aurangzeb. It was later carted off to Iran and its remains are now in Tehran.

**Itimad-Ud-Daulah**

On the opposite bank of the Yamuna, north of the fort, is the exquisite Itimad-ud-daulah - the tomb of Mirza Ghiyas Beg. This Persian gentleman was Jehangir's wazir, or chief minister, and his beautiful daughter Nur Jahan later married the emperor. Nur Jahan constructed the tomb between 1622 and 1628 in a style similar to the tomb she built for Jehangir near Lahore in Pakistan.

Interestingly, many of its design elements foreshadow the Taj, construction of which started only a few years later. The
Itimad-ud-daulah was the first Mughal structure totally built from marble and the first to make extensive use of pietra dura, the marble inlay work which is so characteristic of the Taj. Though small and squat compared to its more famous cousin, its scale is nevertheless attractive. Extremely fine marble latticework passage admit light to the interior, and the beautifully patterned surface of the tomb is superb. It's well worth a visit.

The Itimad-ud-daulah is open from 6 am to 5 pm daily; admission fee except on Friday when it's free.

**Jama Masjid**

Across the railway tracks from the Delhi Gate of Agra Fort is the Jama Masjid, built by Shah Jahan in 1648. An inscription over the main gate indicates that it was built in the name of Jahan Ara, Shah Jahan's favourite daughter, who was eventually imprisoned with Shah Jahan by Aurangzeb. The mosque has no minarets but its sandstone domes have striking marble patterning.

**Jehangir's Palace**

Akbar is believed to have built this palace, the largest private residence in the fort, for his son. This was one of the first signs of the fort's changing emphasis from military to luxurious living quarters. The palace also displays an interesting blend of Hindu and central Asian architectural styles, a contrast to the unique Mughal style which had developed by the time of Shah Jahan.
Khas Mahal

Shah Jahan's Khas Mahal is a beautiful white marble structure used as a private palace. The rooms underneath it were intended as a cool retreat from the summer heat.

Kinari Bazaar

The alleyways of Kinari Bazaar, or old marketplace, start near the Jama Masjid. There are several distinct areas whose names are relics of the Mughals period, although they don't always bear relation to what is sold there today.

Malka Bazaar

Something entirely different is for sale in the Malka Bazaar, where women beckon to passing men from upstairs balconies. In the butcher's area next to the leather market, watch out for the festering bloody animal skins that are piled high in the streets.

Nai Ki Mandi

The Nai Ki Mandi (Barber's Market) is now famous for textiles.

Octagonal Tower

The exquisite Musamman Burj or Octagonal Tower stands close to the Diwan-i-Khas and the small, private Mina Masjid. This is where Shah Jahan died after seven years imprisonment.
in the fort. The tower looks out over the Yamuna and is traditionally considered to have one of the most poignant views of the Taj, but Agra's pollution is now so thick that it's difficult to see. The tower had been badly damaged over the years and was closed for conservation work.

**Ram Bagh**

The earliest of India's Mughal gardens, is also forlorn. You'll need to use a lot of imagination to picture how it must have looked in 1528 when it was constructed by Babur. It's on the riverbank 500 m north of the Chini Ka Rauza and is open from 6 am to 5 pm daily; free on Friday.

**Sabji Mandi**

(Vegetable Market) are still operational.

**Shish Mahal**

The Shish Mahal or Mirror Palace is reputed to have been the harem dressing room and its walls are inlaid with tiny mirrors.

Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Fatehpur Sikri and Itmad-ud-Daulah's Tomb are world fame places of tourist interest situated in the circuit.

**Taj Mahal**

Described as the most extravagant monument ever built for love, this poignant Mughal mausoleum has become the de facto tourist emblem of India. It was constructed by Emperor

219
Shah Jahan in memory of his second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, whose death in childbirth in 1631 left the emperor so heartbroken that his hair is said to have turned gray overnight.

Construction of the Taj began in the same year and was not completed until 1653. In total, 20,000 people from India and Central Asia worked on the building. The main architect is believed to have been Isa Khan, who was from Shiraz in Iran. Experts were also brought from Europe - Austin of Bordeaux and Veroneo of Venice both had a hand in the Taj's decoration - which allowed the British to delude themselves for some time that such an exquisite building must certainly have been designed by a European.

The most unusual story about the Taj is that there might well have been two of them. Shah Jahan, it is said, intended to build a second Taj as his own tomb in black marble, a negative image of the white Taj of Mumtaz Mahal. Before he could embark on this second masterpiece he was deposed by his son, Aurangzeb. Shah Jahan spent the rest of his life imprisoned in Agra Fort, looking out along the river to the final resting place of his wife.

The Taj is definitely worth more than a single visit as its character changes with the light during the day. Dawn is a magical time, but its virtually deserted then. Friday tends to be impossibly crowded and not conducive to appreciating this most serene of monuments. There are plans afoot to once again open the Taj on full-moon nights, probably up until 10 pm.

The grand red sandstone gateway in the interior forecourt is inscribed with verses from the Koran in Arabic. It would
make a stunning entrance to the Taj, but unfortunately these days you only exit through here. The entrance is now through a small door to the right of the gate, where everyone has to undergo a security check. Food, cigarettes, matches and a hundred other items (including, thankfully, paan) are not allowed to be taken inside. There a cloakroom nearby for depositing things for safekeeping. Cameras are permitted, though there are signs on the walkway approaching the Taj forbidding photography within about 100 m of the building. This rule is not enforced and everybody flagrantly ignores it. Taking photographs inside the mausoleum will, however, attract attention.

Paths leading from the gate to the Taj are divided by a long watercourse in which the Taj is reflected. The ornamental gardens through which the paths lead are set out along classical Mughal Charbagh lines - a square quartered by watercourses. To the west is a small museum. It houses original architectural drawings of the Taj, information on the semiprecious stones used in its construction, and some nifty celadon plates, said to split into pieces or change colour if the food served on them contains poison. Entry to the museum is free.

The Taj Mahal itself stands on a raised marble platform on the northern edge of the ornamental gardens. Tall, purely decorative, white minarets grace each corner of the platform. As the Taj Mahal is not a mosque, nobody is called to prayer from them. Twin red sandstone buildings frame the building. The one on the western side is a mosque, with on identical one
on the eastern side. They are purely for symmetry and cannot be used as a mosque because they face in the wrong direction.

The central Taj structure has four small domes surrounding the bulbous central dome. The tombs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan are in a basement room. Above them in the main chamber are false tombs, a common practice in mausoleums of this type. Light is admitted into the central chamber by finely cut marble screens. The echo in this high domed chamber is superb, and there is always somebody there to demonstrate it.

Ironically, the perfect symmetry of the Taj is disrupted only by the tomb of the man who was against it's being built. When Shah Jahan died in 1666, Aurangzeb placed his casket next to that of Mumtaz Mahal. His presence, which was never intended, unbalances the mausoleum's interior.

Although the Taj is amazingly graceful from almost any angle, it's the close-up details which is really astounding. Semiprecious stones are inlaid into the marble in beautiful patterns using a process known as pietra dura. The precision and care which went into the Taj Mahal's design and construction is just as impressive whether you view the Taj from across the river or from arm's length.

Other Attractions

The white marble Dayal Bagh Temple of the Radah Soami religion has been under construction since 1904 and is
not expected to be completed until some time this century. If you're lucky, you may get to see pietra Dera inlaid marble work in process. Although the building is still under construction, the level of artisanship has can be readily admired. Dayal Bagh is two km north of Agra and can be reached by bus or bicycle.

**Etah (Soroun)**

There are not many places of tourist interest or for any religious purpose or otherwise, but still a few temples, Mosque and historical places are found in this district which attracts the people to visit them. The district is situated in close proximity of Agra, Fatehpur-Sikri, Mathura etc. and therefore, the people of this district visit these important places.

**Radha Kund**

It is situated 25.75 km west of Mathura on a metalled road and on the margin of the lake called Radhakund also known as Srikund. It is said that when Krishna had killed the demon Arishtha (of bull form) he felt a sense of guilt. He purified himself with water summoned from all the sacred streams in the country, which were poured into Radhakund and another pond Krishnakund. To commemorate this event every year, on the 8th day of the dark half of Kartika, a large fair is held near this pond.
Awadh Circuit

Lucknow

In fact it was 87 days before a small force under Sir Henry Havelock broke through the besiegers to the remaining half-starved defenders. But once Havelock and his troops were within the Residency, the siege immediately recommenced. It continued unabated from 25 September to 17 November, when final relief arrived with Sir Colin Campbell. Only 980 of the original inhabitants survived the ordeal. Many who did not die from bullet wounds succumbed to cholera, typhoid or smallpox.

The Residency has been maintained as it was at the time of the final relief, and the shattered walls are still scarred by cannon shot. Even since Independence little has changed. The only major work done on the place was the unveiling of an Indian Martyrs Memorial directly opposite.

There's a model room in the main Residency building which is worth visiting to get your bearings from the rather tatty model. Downstairs you can see the cellars where many of the women and children lived throughout the siege. The cemetery at the nearby ruined church has the graves of 2000 men, women and children, including that of Sir Henry Lawrence, 'who tried to do his duty' according to the famous inscription on his weathered gravestone.

The Residency is open from sunrise to sunset, but the model room is open for a relatively shorter period.

The dusty Lucknow zoo in the Banarsi Bagh is open daily except Mondays. The State Museum, which contains an
impressive collection of stone sculptures, is also here. It's open daily except Mondays.

The Capital of Uttar Pradesh rose to prominence as the centre of the Nawabs of Awadh. Burhan-ul-mulk (1724-39) was the first of the Nawabs. The prominent ones included Shuja-Ud-Daula, Asif-Ud-Daula and Wajid Ali Shah, the last of the Nawabs. These decadent Muslim rulers controlled a region of north-central India for about a century after the decline of the Mughal Empire. Most of the interesting monuments in Lucknow date from this period.

The Capital of Awadh was moved from Faizabad to Lucknow during the reign of Asaf-ud-Daula. After Sa'adat Ali Khan, the rest of the Awadh Nawabs were uniformly hopeless at running affairs of state. Wajid Ali Shah was so extravagant and indolent that to this day his name is regarded by many in India as synonymous with lavishness. However, the Nawabs were great patrons of the arts, especially dance and music, and Lucknow's reputation as a city of culture and gracious living stems from this time.

In 1856 the British annexed Awadh, exiling the incompetent Wajid Ali Shah to a palace in Calcutta with an annual pension of UK £ 120,000. The annexation was one of the sparks that ignited the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Lucknow became the centre of the most dramatic events of the mutiny. The British residents of the city held out in the Residency for 87 harrowing days, only to be besieged again for a further two months being relieved.
Despite its rich cultural associations, Lucknow is not a particularly attractive city and it suffers from extremely high levels of pollution. However, the huge crumbling mausoleums of the Nawabs and the pock-marked ruins of the Residency can make it an interesting place to visit. Lucknow is very spread out. The historic monuments are mainly in the north-western part of the old city, near the Gomti River. The narrow alleys of Aminabad are the main shopping area. Hazratganj is the modern, fashionable district where you'll find most of the budget and mid-range hotels.

It is believed that the Imams are like a chain of lights emanating from the Sun which is their origin, and yet they are never separated from it, In the light of this concept, the Imams are considered to be sinless (masoom) and ones who possess a perfect knowledge of both the esoteric and exoteric order. That is why Shi'ites regard them the true descendents of the Prophet. Except for the 12th, all Imams were either slain or poisoned at the cruel hands of the rulers of that time. Their tombs were built by followers in different cities of the Arab land like Karbala, Najaf, Kazmain, Mashhad, etc. When Persian rulers and Iranians alongwith the Mughal Emperor Humayun came to India, they constructed Imambaras and Imam Bargahs in India. One of the army chiefs of the Mughal Emperor came to Lucknow and founded a Nawabi regime in Awadh. He was a Shia Muslim. He and his successors built true replicas of the mausoleums of the Imama which existed in Arabia. These constructions were called Imambaras in Lucknow and Imam Bargahs in Hyderabad. These Imambaras were built by Awadh

226
Nawabs for the sheer love of religion. But now they have become centres of tourist attraction. More than one lakh domestic and international tourists visit these monumental buildings and appreciate the mixed blend of Iranian, Mughal and Rajput architecture.

**Bara Imambara**

The Bara or Great Imambara (an imambara is the tomb of a Shi'ite Muslim holy man) was built in 1784 by Asaf-ud-Daula as a famine relief project. The central hall of the Imambara, 50 m long and 15 m high, is one of the largest vaulted galleries in the world. An external stairway leads to an upper floor laid out as an amazing labyrinth known as the bhulbhulaiya; a guide may be useful since the dark passages stop abruptly at openings which drop straight to the courtyard below.

There's a mosque with two tall minarets in the courtyard complex but non-Muslim are not allowed in. To the right of this is a 'bottomless' well. The Imambara complex is open from sunrise to 6 pm.

Beside the Bara Imambara, built by Asaf-ud-Daula, is the imposing Rumi Darwaza, a replica of an entrance gate built in Istanbul. 'Rumi' (relating to Rome) is the term Muslims applied to Istanbul when it was still Byzantium, the capital of the eastern Roman Empire.

**Shah Najaf Imambara**

The plain Shah Najaf Imambara, opposite the Carlton Hotel, is the tomb of Ghazi-ud-din Haidar who died in 1827.
The interior is used to store garish chandeliers and tazias, elaborate creations of wood, bamboo and silver paper which are carried through the streets during the Muharram Festival. The Imambara is open all days.

Roomi Darwaza

On the western side of Asfi Imambara is a sixty feet high gate built by Nawab Asif-ud-Daula.

Jama Masjid

West of the Hussainabad Imambara is the Jama Masjid which was started by Mohammad Ali Shah and completed after his death.

Imambara Wilayati Begum

Nawab Shah Naseeruddin Haider, ruler of Awadh, was fond of buildings and gardens. He was married to the daughter of one George Hopkins Walters who embraced Islam. She was bestowed by the Nawab with the title of 'Mukhaddarat-e-Alia'. She was publicly known as 'Wilayati Begum'. She, along with her sister Ashrafun-Nisa, constructed an Imambara in the premises of the palace of the Nawab which is now called Residency. She adopted all the rituals of Shi'ite Muslims and arranged Majlises and Mehfils. This Imambara is situated near the river Gomti. During the mutiny of 1857, when the British armies attacked and fought the soldiers of the Nawab, the entire buildings including the Imambara were ruined by the canon shells. Although it is under the administration of U.P.
Archaeology Department, it is a pity it is not maintained properly.

**Imambara Agha Baqar**

Located in Subzi Mandi Chowk area of old city, the Imambara Agha Baqar was built during the reign of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula (1756-1775) by Agha Baqar Khan who was a Panch Hazari Raisaldar in the king’s army. It was the second in a series of Imambaras which were constructed during the Nawabi rule. In the 1857 mutiny, the British soldiers used it as stable for horses and it was badly damaged. In 1859, it was rebuilt by Mirza Haider Shikoh, son of Mirza Kam Bakhsh, grandson of Shah Alam II, King of Delhi. In the compound of the Imambara there is a graveyard wherein Mirza Kam Bakhsh was buried. In Moharram (the first month of Hijri calendar) Majlises (religious gatherings) are held here. Shi’ite pilgrims from far and near come and visit the Imambara. The affairs of the Imambara are managed by a Committee of Trustees appointed by the U.P. Central Shia WAQF Board.

**Imambara Raja Jhaoo Lal**

The rulers of Awadh were secular and broadmined. Besides Imambaras and Masjids, they also built temples like the Hanuman Mandir of Aliganj, the Kali Mandir, the Chandrika Devi Mandir, the Mankameshwar Mandir, the Mahabir Mandir, etc. Similarly, Hindu Wazirs and army chiefs of the Nawabs constructed Masjids and Imambaras. The Imambara of Raja Jhaoo Lal is one of them. It is situated in Mohalla Thakur
Ganj. Raja Jhaoo Lal built this Imambara and one Masjid in the same premises. But Lucknow-Hardoi Road, which was constructed by the Britishers, separated these two buildings of the Imambara and the Masjid. Now, the Imambara is on the left side and the Masjid is on the right side of the road. This Masjid is known as Imli Wali Masjid and the Imambara as Baitulmal Ka Imambara. On the second Sunday of Safar (the second month of the Hijri calendar), Shia Muslims gather here to mourn the death of Hazrat Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W). Her grave, which existed in Jannat-ul-Baqi of Madina, was destroyed by a Saudi King. The Imambara is a beautiful piece of Mughal and Rajput architecture. A vast piece of land was attached to it. But now it has been encroached by the local residents. Tazias and Zaris are buried in the compound of the Imambara during Moharram and Chehlum.

**Imambara Sibtainabad**

During his rule from 1842 to 1847, Nawab Amjad Ali Shah founded the famous Mohalla of Hazrat Ganj in the heart of Lucknow. In the area he procured a vast piece of land for the construction of an Imambara and a Masjid. On the north side, two palatial gates were constructed but soon thereafter. Nawab Amjad Ali Shah died. He was buried in the compound and, therefore, it was known as a Maqbara at a later stage. When Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, son of Amjad Ali Shah, ascended the throne, he got the Imambara and Masjid constructed. It is said that a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs were spent on the Imambara alone.
Under the instructions of the Nawab, the Imambara was well decorated. Chandeliars, mirrors and golden lamps were fitted. In 1857, when Wajid Ali Shah was forced to migrate to Matiaburj in Kolkata, British soldiers looted the Imambara. Its valuables were plundered and the building damaged. In between the two gates a road was constructed for the use by soldiers. This road is now known as Maqbara Road. A small portion of the Imambara can still be found standing today. It is, however, occupied by some furniture manufacturers. Officers of the Archaeology Department do not care to get the Imambara vacated from its illegal occupants. The building is made of 'Lakhor Eint' (Small bricks of 5 inches x 3 inches). No steel or wood has been used in its roof. Tourists visit and appreciate the architectural value of the building.

**Imambara Husainabad**

Also known as the chhota or small Imambara, this Imambara is one of the best decorated buildings of the state. It was constructed by Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah, the third ruler of Awadh, in 1837. It is connected to Asfi Imambara by a metalled road. In its east and west sides there are two gates which resemble the famous Roomi Gate. At the entrance of the building there is a huge tall gate. Opposite to this gate, on the right side of the road, a Naubat Khana (Musical house) was built where Shehnai used to be played on auspicious occasions. This, however, is now discontinued. The Imambara is located inside. An artificial canal, constructed in front of the Imambara, enhances its beauty when its shadow is reflected in it. There
are two tombs on either side of the canal. In one of these tombs, the daughter of the Nawab was buried. The main Imambara consists of Tazias made of wax, sandalwood, ivory, silver and gold. Precious lamps and Italian chandeliers are seen hanging from the roof and lamps studded with jewels are fitted on the walls. Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah and his mother were buried in the Imambara. By the sides of the gate, shops selling readymade garments, laides and gents chikan suits, toys and photos of important buildings of the city as well as of the Nawabs had come up. These attract the attention of tourists.

**Lakshman Tila**

The high ground on the southern bank of the River Gomti nearby, was the original site of the town which became known as Lucknau in the fifteenth century. Aurangzeb's Mosque now stands on this site.

**Residency**

Built in 1800, for the British Resident, this group of buildings became the stage for the most dramatic events of the 1857 Mutiny - the Siege of Lucknow.

The British inhabitants of the city all took refuge with Sir Henry Lawrence in the Residency upon the outbreak of the Mutiny. In total there were 3000 people crammed into the Residency's grounds, including 800 British soldiers, 700 loyal native troops, 150 European volunteers, 550 women and children, and some 700 Indian servants. The Residency was
technically indefensible, but those seeking shelter expected relief to arrive in a matter of days.

Chinhat

Situated only at a distance of 10 kms from Lucknow city on Faizabad road, it was also the scene of fierce battle during struggle of 1857 in which British troops had to retreat. There are now a number of cottage industries like pottery, chikan embroidery and clay toys.

Kampil

This town is of great antiquity. It is mentioned in Mahabharata as capital of Panchala potentates. Here, a fort was built by Sultan Balban. It has ancient temples, namely Rameshwar Nath and Kameshwar Nath. The place is sacred to the Jains also.

Kannauj

Only a few dismal ruins indicate that this was the mighty Hindu capital of the region in the 7th century AD. It quickly fell into disrepair after Mahmud of Ghazni's raids. This was where Humayun was defeated by Sher Shah in 1540, and forced to temporarily flee India. There's not much to see now—just an archaeological museum, a mosque and the ruins of the fort.

It is small but historic town of the district. The Jama Masjid in the town was built by Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur in 1406 A.D. There are also several important tombs and mosques in the town.
Rae Bareli

Rae Bareli, is situated on the banks of the Sai and is connected with the other five district headquarters namely Lucknow, Unnao, Allahabad, Pratapgarh and Sultapur by metalled roads. Rae Bareli is said to have been founded by the Bhars and was originally known as Bharauli or Barauli and Jahanabad was founded by Subedar Jahan Khan, who surrounded it with a wall. There are four fine mosques in the town, besides, others of lesser note. The Jama Masjid was originally built by Sultan Ibrahim Shah and was restored by the emperor Alamgir in 1672 A.D., as stated in an Arabic inscription. The second great mosque was built in 1040 Hijri (1631 A.D.) by Nawab Jahan Khan. The third is a copy of the Kaaba at Macca and was built by Shah Alam-ullah. It has no domes but three spacious halls. The fourth mosque is in the suburb of Daina and was built by a son of Shah Alam-ullah.

Sankisa

Now, it is a hamlet on a mound. It was probably a fort. The main attractions are Asokan Pillar and Bisari temple. The place is sacred for Hindus and Buddhists.

Also worth visiting are the towns of Shamshabad, Khudaganj and Furrukhabad (Fatehogarh fort). Shringirampur, remarkably rich in past on the southern bank of the Ganges, is famous for fairs. Incidentally, after Mathura, the district organizes the largest number of fairs in the State.
Hardoi

Hirnya Kashyap-ka-Qila and Prahlad Ghat in Hardoi town on Sandi road, Sandilya in Shahabad town, Berua temple in Berua village 15 kms away from Balamau junction. Akbar-ki-Masjid in Gopamau, Ruiya Qila near Madhoganj town, Hatya-Haran Tirth on Hardoi-Kothawan-Atrauli road Bramha Vart near Sandi town, Didhashram Dhodia on Hardoi-Pihani road are the places of tourist attraction and are being developed as tourist centres of the district.

Faizabad

Faizabad was once the capital of Avadh but rapidly declined after the death of Bahu Begum, the wife of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula. Most of the Islamic buildings in Faizabad were built at her behest, and her mausoleum is said to be the finest of its type in Uttar Pradesh. Here husband also has an impressive mausoleum. There are three large mosques in the market (chowk) area and pleasant gardens in Guptar Park, where the temple from which Rama is supposed to have disappeared stands. The town makes a convenient base for visiting nearby Ayodhya.

Bahraich

Situated only 3 kms. North from Bahraich town, there is a mausoleum of Sufi and saint Sayed Salar Masud Ghazi which was built by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in 1034 A.D. Every year a fair is held. People of all faiths visit this place to offer their homage.
Gonda

The most celebrated fair is that of Debi Patam near Tulsipur. This fair, which occurs in the beginning of Chait attracts some 75000 people and is largely attended by merchants from Nepal and other parts of the country.

Sultanpur

The district does not possess places of tourist interest of much importance. There are, however, a few places associated with legends and traditions and have religious importance. There are a few other places which have ancient sites. Vijaithuwa, Dhau pap and Diyara are the places of religious importance for Hindus. Aldamaud is noted for mansoleum of Muslim Martyres. Isauli and Bhadayya are known for ancient sites.

Ayodhya

Ayodhya, 6 kms. from Faizabad, is one of Hinduism's seven holy cities. It's a major pilgrimage centre since it is not only the birthplace of Rama, it's also connected with many events in the Ramayana. Unfortunately, its name has become synonymous with rising Hindu fanaticism since the fateful day on 6 December 1992 when a Hindu mob destroyed a mosque they believed had been built on the site of a temple marking Rama's birthplace. The event sent shock waves throughout India and threatened the nation's secular framework.
The Atharaveda described Ayodhya as 'a city built by gods and being as prosperous as paradise itself although today it's just a small, dusty town with an amazing abundance of temples and monkeys. It sees few foreigners, and anyone intending to visit should keep an eye on the latest developments in the temple-mosque saga. Give the town a wide berth if there's rioting.

Ayodhya stands on the right bank of the Ghaghra- highly revered by Hindus and thronged by millions of them for pilgrimage. According to Hindu mythology, it represents the forehead of Vishnu and is the chief of the seven cities of pilgrimage in India. Ayodhya is pre-eminently a town of temples. Yet not all the places of worship are connected with Hindu religion. There are some Jain shrines and severed Muslim mosques and tombs.

**Kanpur**

Nestled on the banks of the eternal Ganga, Kanpur stands as one of North India's major industrial centres with its own historical, religious and commercial importance. Believed to be founded by king Hindu Singh of the erstwhile state of Sachendi, Kanpur was originally known as 'Kanhpur'. Historically, Jajmau on the eastern outskirts of present day Kanpur is regarded as one of the most archaic townships of Kanpur district.

Until the 1st half of the 18th century Kanpur continued to survive as an insignificant village. Its fate, however, took a new turn soon after. In May, 1765, Shuja-ud-daula the Nawab Waizr of Awadh, was defeated by the British near Jajmau. It was
probably at this time that strategic importance of the site of Kanpur was realized by the British. European businessmen had by this time gradually started establishing themselves in Kanpur. In order to ensure protection to their lives and property the 'Awadh local forces' were shifted here in 1778. Kanpur passed into British hands under the treaty of 1801 with Nawab Saadat Ali Khan of Awadh. This forms a turning point in the history of Kanpur. Soon Kanpur became one of the most important military stations of British India. It was declared a district on 24th March, 1803.

Kanpur was soon to become the epicentre of the outbreak of 1857, as some of the leading luminaries of the War of Independence hailed from here, namely - Nana Sahib Tantiya Tope, Azimoolah Khan and Brigadier Jwala Prasad. The three strategic events of the 1857 war at Kanpur were: the on slaught at 'wheeler's entrenchment', the 'massacre at Sati Chaura Ghat' and the 'Bibighar massacre'. Nana Sahib had declared independence on the 7th of June, 1857 at Kanpur. The British under Commander Hugh Wheeler retreated into a shallow earth entrenchment in the cantonment area, later known in history as 'wheeler's entrenchment'. The English garrison surrendered in the last week of June 1857 on terms of safe passage to Allahabad. But when on the morning of 27th June, the soldiers along with the women and children were about to embark into the boats at Sat Chaura Ghat, fighting broke out and most of the men were killed. The survivors, women and children were rescued who were imprisoned into the Savada Kothi and later shifted to Bibighar in the cantonment magistrates' compound.
But when it became clear that relieving forces under General Havelock were nearing the city and defeat was inevitable, the captives - all women and children, were massacred and their dismembered bodies buried in the well of the compound on 15th July, 1857. The Bibighar was dismantled by the British on reoccupation of Kanpur and a 'memorial railing and a cross' raised at the site of the well. The well is now bricked over. Only remains of a circular ridge survive which can be still seen at the Nana Rao park. The Kanpur Memorial Church - 'The all souls cathedral' was raised in honour of the fallen at the north-east corner of Wheeler's entrenchment in 1862 by the British.

**Jajmau**

The mound of Jajmau, on the eastern end of the city occupies a high places among ancient sites of the region. Excavations of the mound were undertaken during 1957-58 which unearthed antiquities ranging from 600 BC to 1600 AD.

**Shri Radha Krishna Temple**

Beautifully constructed, J.K. Temple is a boon to the devotees. Built by J.K. Trust this architectural delight is a unique blend of ancient architecture with the modern. The even-level roofs of the mandaps have been provided with adequate ventilation and sufficient light. Among the five shrines that the temple has the central one is consecrated to Shri Radhakrishna and the other are adorned with idols of Shri Laxminarayan, Shri Aradhanarishwar, Shri Narmadeswar and Shri Hanuman.
Allen Forest Zoo

The Kanpur Zoo was established in 1971 and ranks among one of the best zoos of the country. It is an ideal place for tourist and picnics among picturesque surroundings.

Kamla Retreat

It is under the possession of Singhania's family and is a beauty spot of the city. There is a swimming pool with an equipment for producing artificial waves and suitable for lighting.

Nana Rao Park

To the west of Phool Bagh is located the Nana Rao Park. It is the site of the Bibighar of 1857. The park was renamed as Nana Rao Park after Independence.

Phool Bagh

It is a beautiful park in the heart of the city on the Mall Road. In the centre of the park is a building known as Ganesh Shankar Vidhyarthi Memorial. It is now known at Ganesh Udyan.

Bithoor

The quiet and beautiful township of Bithoor is situated on the Kannauj Road, 27 km from Kanpur. Situated on the banks of the Ganga, this tranquil spot is of considerable historical and religious importance. According to Hindu scriptures Lord Brahma came to Utpalaranya, Brahmavarta Ghat.
Vindhya Circuit

Allahabad

The city of Allahabad is 135 kms west of Varanasi at the confluence of two of India's most important rivers- the Ganges and the Yamuna (Jumna). The mythical Saraswati River, the River of Enlightenment, is also believed to join them here. The confluence, known as the Sangam, is considered to have great soul-cleansing powers and all pious Hindus hope to bathe here at least once in their lifetime. Hundreds of thousands bathe here every January-February and once every 12 years the Kumbh Mela, the world's largest gathering of pilgrims, draws millions to the confluence for a holy dip.

Allahabad has a fort built by Akbar, which overlooks the confluence of the rivers, and also the Nehru family home, Anand Bhavan. Not many foreign travelers pause in this friendly city, but it's an interesting, relaxing and worthwhile stop, especially if you're partial to Indian-style espressos and side-walk cafes.

Built on a very ancient site, Allahabad was known in Aryan times as Prayag, and Brahma himself is said to have performed a sacrifice here. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang described visiting the city in 634 AD, and it acquired its present name in 1584, under Akbar. Later Allahabad was taken by the Marathas, sacked by the Pathans and finally ceded to the British in 1801 by the Nawab of Awadh.

It was in Allahabad that the East India Company officially handed over control of India to the British government in 1858,
following the Mutiny. The city was a centre of the Indian National Congress and at the conference here in 1920, Mahatma Gandhi proposed his programme of nonviolent resistance to achieve independence.

A city of many dimensions is what befits a description of Allahabad. In addition to being a major pilgrimage centre, the city has played an important part in the formation of modern India. Hindu mythology states that Lord Brahma, the creator god, chose a land for 'Prakrishta Yajna'. This land, at the confluence of three holy rivers - Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, blessed by gods, came to be known as 'Prayag' or 'Allahabad'. Foreseeing the sanctity of the place, Lord Brahma also called it as "Tirth Raj" or 'King of all pilgrimage centres'. The Scriptures - Vedas and the great epics - Ramayana and Mahabharata, refer to this place as Prayag.

During the time of the Mughals a massive fort was built in 1583 by emperor Akbar close to the Sangam. It can be best appreciated from the boats on the river. During British times Allahabad became the headquarters of North Western Provinces, after being shifted from Agra. Wellpreserved relics of the British impact includes the Muir College and the All Saints Cathedral. Other places of interest are:

Khusru Bagh

Close to the railway station is Khusru Bagh, a scrappy walled garden which contains the tomb of Prince Khusru, son of Jehangir, who was executed by his father. Nearby is the unoccupied tomb intended for his sister and the tomb of his
Rajput mother, who was said to have poisoned herself in despair at Khusru's opposition to his father.

**Allahabad Museum**

It has galleries devoted to local archaeological finds, including terracotta figurines from Kausambi. It also has natural history exhibits, an art gallery and artifacts donated by the Nehru family. The museum is open daily. Opposite the university, is the house where Rudyard Kipling lived, but it is not open to the public.

**Anand Bhawan**

This shrine to the Nehru family must be the best kept museum in the country, which indicates the high regard in which this famous dynasty is held in India. The family home was donated to the Indian government by Indira Gandhi in 1970. The exhibits in the house show how this well-off family became involved in the struggle for Indian Independence and produced four generations of astute politicians- Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

**Minto Park**

It is near the Yamuna, is where Lord Canning read out the declaration by which Britain took over control of India from the East India Company in 1858. The Nag Basuki Temple is mentioned in the Puranas and is on the bank of the Ganges, north of the railway bridge.
Planetarium

In the manicured garden is an outbuilding housing a pictorial display of Jawaharlal Nehru's life. A planetarium, built in the grounds in 1979, has hourly shows daily.

Swaraj Bhawan

Next door is Swaraj Bhawan, where Motilal Nehru lived until 1930 and where Indira Gandhi was born. A Hindi and English audiovisual presentation called The Story of Independence is shown daily. It lasts a little under an hour and costs some nominal charges.

Sangam

At this point the shallow, muddy Ganges meets the clearer, deeper, green Yamuna. During the month of Magha (mid-January to mid-February) pilgrims come to bathe at this holy confluence for the festival known as the Magh Mela. Astrologers calculate the holiest time to enter the water and draw up a 'Holy Dip Schedule'. The most propitious time of all happens only every 12 years when the massive Kumbh Mela takes place. There is a half-mela (Ardh Mela) every six years.

An enormous temporary township springs up on the vacant land on the Allahabad side of the river and elaborate precautions have to be taken for the pilgrims' safety. In the early 1950s, 350 people were killed in a stampede to the water (an incident recreated in Vikram Seth's novel, A Suitable Boy).

Sunrise and sunset can be spectacular here. Boats out to the confluence are a bit of a tourist trap and what you pay very
much depends on how many other people are around. Next to the fort you should be able to share a boat or hire a whole boat. It is more interesting sharing with Indians on a pilgrimage since you will then appreciate the spot's religious significance.

**Hanuman Temple**

This popular temple, open to non-Hindus, is unusual because the Hanuman idol is reclining rather than upright. It is said that every year during the floods the Ganges rises so that it can touch the feet of the sleeping Hanuman before it starts receding.

**Kausambi**

It is situated on the bank of the Yamuna to the west of Allahabad. It is identified with the Kosam ruins and was once the capital of the Vatsa, a kingdom ruled by king Udayan. The fort of this place is ascribed to Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna. The place is also noted for archaeological remains and a large number of Buddhist coins, sculptures and other remains have been unearthed here. Lord Buddha is said to have preached here. Two Vihars or monasteries still exist here. The main stupa located here measures about 25 x 25 m. and was built in fifth century B.C. A dilapidated mosque built in 1352 A.D. also exist. The Digambar Jains call it Kausambinagri, who have a much venerated temple here.

The erstwhile capital of the Vatsa Kingdom, believed to have been ruled by King Udayan. Kaushambi, however, was also a great centre of Buddhism and Jainism. Other places of
interest are: Patalpuri Temple, Shankar Viman Mandapam, Bharadwaj Ashram, Beni Mahadeo Temple, Allahabad Public Library, Alopī Devi Temple, Hanumat Niketan, Chandra Shekhar Azad Park, Children's Park (Bal Udyān), Shiv Koti, Nepali Temple, Kalyani Devi Temple and Nagva Suki Temple.

**Sringve Pur**

Sringve Pur was the kingdom of Nishadraj (king of Boatmen). Excavations here have revealed a temple of Sringi Rishi. On the banks of the Ganga there's a platform 'Ramchaura'-said to be the place where Lord Ram stayed over night while going to the forest and His feet were washed by Nishadraj here before taking the Lord in his boat.

**Varanasi**

The city of Siva on the bank of the sacred Ganges is one of the holiest places in India. Hindu pilgrims come to bathe in the waters of the Ganges, a ritual which washes away all sins. It is also an auspicious place to die, since expiring here ensures release from the cycle of rebirths and an instant passport to heaven. It's a supposedly magical city where the most intimate rituals of life and death take place in public on the city's famous ghats where steps lead down to the river. It's this accessibility to the practices of an ancient religious tradition that captivates so many visitors.

In the past, the city had been known as Kashi and Benares, but its present name is a restoration of an ancient name meaning the city between two rivers- the Varuna and Asi.
It has been a centre of learning and civilisation for over two centuries years, and claims to be one of the oldest living cities in the world. Mark Twain obviously thought it looked the part when he dropped by on a lecture tour, since he told the world that 'Benares is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together'. The old city does have an antique feel but few buildings are more than a couple of hundred years old thanks to marauding Muslim invaders and Aurangzeb's destructive tendencies.

The old city of Varanasi is situated along the western bank of the Ganges and extends back from the riverbank ghats in a labyrinth of alleyways too narrow for traffic. Godaulia is just outside the old city, and Lahurabir is to the north-east, separated from the cantonment by the railway line.

One of the best ways to get your bearings in Varanasi is to remember the positions of the ghats, particularly important ones like Dasaswamedh Ghat. The alleyways of the old city can be disorienting, but the hotels here are well signposted. The big 'international hotels' and the Government of India tourist office are in the cantonment north of Varanasi Junction railway station. The TV tower is the on obvious landmark in this area.

The city extends from Raj Ghat, near the major road and rail bridge, to Asi Ghat, near the university. The Asi Ghat is one of the five special ghats which pilgrims are supposed to bathe at in sequence during the ritual route called Panchtirthi Yatra. The order is Asi, Dasawamedh, Adi Kesava, Panchganga and finally Manikarnika. Much of the Tulsidas Ghat has fallen
down towards the river. The Bachraj Ghat is Jain and there are three riverbank Jain temples. Many of the ghats are owned by maharajas or other princely rulers, such as the very fine Shivala Ghat owned by the Maharaja of Varanasi. The Dandi Ghat is the ghat of ascetics known as Dandi Panths, and nearby is the very popular Hanuman Ghat.

The Harishchandra or Samshan Ghat is a secondary burning ghat. It is one of the oldest ghats in the city. Above the crowded Kedar Ghat is a shrine popular with Bengalis and south Indians. Mansarowar Ghat was built by Man Singh of Amber and named after the Tibetan lake at the foot of Mt. Kailash, Siva's Himalayan home. Someswar or Lord of the Moon Ghat is said to be able to heal diseases. The Munshi Ghat is very picturesque, while Ahalya Bai's Ghat is named after the Maratha woman ruler of Indore.

**Benares Hindu University**

Varanasi has long been a centre of learning and that tradition is continued today at the Benares Hindu University, built in 1917. It was founded by the great nationalist Pandit Malaviya as a centre of education in Indian art, music, culture and philosophy, and for the study of Sanskrit. The five sq. km. Campus houses the Bharat Kala Bhavan which has a fine collection of miniature paintings, sculptures from the 1st. to 15th. centuries and old photographs of Varanasi.
Bharat Mata Temple

Dedicated to 'Mother India' this unadorned temple has a marble relief map of India instead of the usual images of gods and goddesses. The temple was opened by Mahatma Gandhi and is worth a visit if you are staying nearby. It has a relief map of India carved out of marble which is dedicated to Mother India.

Durga Temple

The Durga Temple is commonly known as the Monkey Temple due to the many frisky monkeys that have made it their home. It was built in the 18th century by a Bengali maharani and is stained red with ochre. The small temple is built in north Indian Nagara style with a multi-tiered sikhara. Durga is the 'terrible' from the Siva's consort Parvati, so at festivals there are often sacrifices of goats. Non-Hindus can enter the courtyard but not the inner sanctum.

Golden Temple

The most sacred temple in Varanasi is dedicated to Vishveswara-Siva as Lord of the Universe. The golden temple was built in 1776 by Ahalya Bai of Indore, which gives the temple its colloquial name. Non-Hindus are not allowed into the temple but can view it from the upper floor of a house across the street.

River Front (Ghats)

The sunrise of Varanasi is most fascinating to see at the river Ghats situated barely five kms. from the city. Thousands
of pilgrims flock to Ghats at the dawn for salutations to the sun. There are in all approximately eighty such ghats but Dasashwamedh ghat is prominent among all.

**Gyanvapi Mosque**

It presents a rare specimen of the art of ancient temples through the ruins of the Vishweswara temple which was destroyed by Aurangzeb and a mosque was constructed on its ruins. Other features of interest are: Rajdari and Devdari falls, Yahiapur, Kal Bhairon Ka Mandir, Kashi Vishwanath Temple, New Vishwanath Temple, Tulsi Manas Mandir and Tulsi Manas Temple.

**Mirzapur**

Famous for its hand-knotted carpets, this district has a most picturesque river front studded with ghats, richly carved temples, impressive forts and thick forests. Mirzapur is developing as a great industrial centre. Many major power project and factories are located in this region.

**Sonbhadra**

The district has a most picturesque river front studded with ghats, richly carved temples and thick forests, Vindhya Devi Temple, Ashtabhuja Devi Temple, Sakteshgarh Fort, Vijaigarh Fort, Aghori Fort, Sidhnath ki Dari Sirsi, Lalkhawa, Ahrawa Fort are the nearby places of tourist interest. Tanda Falls, Jargodam, Rihand Dam, Wyndham Falls are picnic spots
and for excursions. Dudhi, one of the tehsil headquarter is also a place of tourist interest.

**Vindhyachal**

One of the Shakti Peeths, Vindhya Vasini Devi Temple, Ashtabhuja and Kalikhoh are the major attractions.

**Chunar**

Chunar Fort, overlooking the Ganges, has had a succession of owners representing most of India's rulers over the last 500 years. Sher Shah took it from Humayun in 1540, Akbar recaptured it for the Mughals in 1575 and in the mid-eighteenth century it passed to the Nawabs of Awadh. They were shortly followed by the British, whose gravestones here make interesting reading. Chunar's other claim to fame is that Ashoka's edicts were carved on to pillars made from the locally quarried sandstone. Chunar is 36 kms. south-west of Varanasi and can be reached by bus.

**Jaunpur**

Barring a few antiquarian remains Jaunpur does not offer much to the interest of tourists. Buildings of archaeological and historical importance included Atala Masjid, Khalis Mukhlis or the Dariba or the Char-ungli Mosque, Jhanjhri Masjid, Lal Darwaza Masjid, Jami Masjid. These and many other places that once adorned Jaunpur have long disappeared. Numerous minor buildings are, however, still standing in Jaunpur.
Ambedkar Nagar

Kichhauchha is a place in Tanda tehsil, also known as Kichhauchha Sharif. It is situated on low ground surrounded by streams and tanks. Its history is closely connected with the celebrated saint Makhdoom Ashraf, fourth in descent from him was Shah Jafar who drove out the Bhars from Kichhauchha and took possession of it.
Water Cruise Circuit

As the country's ports and waterways go in for upgradation, there will emerge a scope for both ocean and river cruises. This is an area relatively untapped in India, with crude barges or boats serving as small town entertainment even in world-famous centres like Goa. More attention from the private sector to this aspect of tourism can bring in much needed income that can be ploughed into beautifying riverside spots as scenic, picnic and entertainment complexes. Haryana, for example, has made good use of its sprinkling of lakes to develop tourist resorts, though its marketing leaves much scope for improvement.

In river rafting, India possesses a tremendous potential in this field. The river Ganges from Rishikesh to Rudraprayag provides an excellent flow for this sport. Rivers such as Teesta in North Bengal, Brahmaputra in Assam, Beas in Manali and Indus in Ladak provide excellent conditions for the river rafters. Presently this sport is promoted by private operators. Given its potential in the rivers of India there is a great need for government participation on a large scale. If this is forthcoming it would give a big impetus to adventure tourism. It is quite an expensive sport since the equipments have to be imported. Given some help and encouragement, it can be made lucrative. The paucity of trained instructors only tends to discourage this sport.
Our country has a very long coastline. The Coromandel coast and Malabar coast are well known all over the world. These two areas are ideal places for water sports. Indian coastal areas are also blessed with natural beauty.

We can also boast of a number of lakes including fresh water ones. Orissa and Kerala are famous for their lakes. This is the right time to exploit the tourism potential of these areas which remain untapped till now. These aquatic regions are ideal for adventure tourism including international aquatic events.

In Uttar Pradesh, in order to promote adventure tourism and water transport, special efforts are being made by the Department of Tourism. Boat clubs had been opened at Lucknow and Allahabad in 1997-98, where training is imparted on water sports. Two cruise boats had also been purchased and purchase of a 'bazra' luxury boat is proposed. Allahabad Development Authority is already running a cruise boat while the second one will be run between Chunar and Varanasi.

A boat ride on the Ganges has become one of the must dos of a visit to Varanasi. It's customary to do the trip early in the morning when the light is particularly atmospheric. Even if you are not staying near the river, it's easy to organize a boat for sunrise as rickshaw walahs are keen to get a pre-dawn rendezvous arranged for the trip to the river. Get the rickshaw-wallah to take you to a large ghat such as Daraswamedh, where one can choose from a large number of boats. Travellers have often reported of having being taken to smaller ghats with a single boat placing them in a poor bargaining position.
The government rate for hiring a boat capable of holding up to four people is Rs. 45 per hour. For a boat that can seat up to ten people is Rs. 60 per hour. Tourist frequently pay much more out of ignorance.

The Water Cruise Circuit is of special interest to tourists, particularly foreign. While Uttar Pradesh is a landlocked state and can not provide sunny beaches and scope for ocean cruises and other kindred sports, its unique multi river system, which stretches all the way from the west to the east, offers immense potential for river rafting and scope for adventure tourism. The river Ganges from Rishikesh to Rudrapryag provides an excellent flow for this sport. A boat ride on the Ganges to visit intriguing Varanasi, as described earlier, is a must for any tourist domestic, or foreign and it is indeed very popular. To promote adventure tourism and water transport facilities special official attention has been given to this sector. Boat clubs have come up at Lucknow and Allahabad and training in water sports is imparted there. Some cruise boats have already been acquired and cruises have been organized particularly to Varanasi.
Jain Shrines Circuit

It is the secret land of Tirthankars. It is the region where non-violence, peace and truth have been understood and practiced for thousands of years. Uttar Pradesh is the renowned place of many historical dramas and mythologies. The innumerable Jain Shrines that dot the state of Uttar Pradesh speak of a myriad intimate association with the lives and activities of the Jain Tirthankars (Jain religious preachers), who spread the message of peace, non-violence, love and enlightenment. It is this that has attracted and moulded the sentiments of millions of people across the nation as well as the world.

Today, around 3.2 million Jain devotees live in India. Uttar Pradesh holds immense attraction for all those who desire to see the great Jain architectural splendour, and to know and understand the teachings of the great Tirthankars - the liberated souls who, through hard penance, freed themselves from the cycle of birth and rebirth. And, offered to humanity the recourse to salvation, freedom from the ocean of Phenomenal Existence, and liberation from the 'Cycle of Rebirth' through Jainism.

Jain Shrines

The group of 31 Jain temples, though of a later date, are no less remarkable. The site was a Jain centre from the post-Gupta times up to the 17th century. Panels depicting scenes from Jain mythology, Tirthankara images, Manastambha (votive pillar), Ayagpatta (votive tablet), Sarvato bhadra pratima (Jain...
images visible from all sides) and Sahastrakuta (pillar carved with a thousand Jaina figures) are found here.

Ratnapuri, Swargdwar, Baksaria Tola, Ramkot Muhalla and Muhall- Mondhiana Rajghat in Ayodhya as also under mentioned places of interest from the point of the followers of Jainism.

Kausabi got its due importance with the presence of the 6th Thirthankar Padmaprabhu, who was born here. He also grew up and received his education here.

Sarswati is more popular as a holy place of Jains. Each year, thousands of Jains come to this place to celebrate the birth day of Lord Sambhanath.

Shauripur has two temples of the Digambara Jain Samaj, and pilgrims from all over the country come in to offer their prayers throughout the year.

**Kashi**

Kashi has the honour of being the birth place of four Thirthankars, namely Suparshav, Chandraprabhu, Shreas and Parshva.

Bhadaini Jain Pilgrimage - the birth place of the 7th Tirthankar and Bhelupura - the birth place of 23rd Tirthankar.

**Hastinapur (Meerut)**

Hastinapur was constructed by the Gods. Starting from the time of Lord Rishabh Nath to the time of Lord Mahavir, Jainism has been influential in this place. Thirthankaras Lord Shantinath. Lord Kunthanath and Lord Aranath were born here.

257
Pawanagar is famous for being the place where Lord Mahavir attained 'Nirvana'. It is also known as Sathiardiha and described as 'Sathik Deha'.

In Kakandi, the 9th Tirthankar Lord Suvidhinath was born. He took his Diksha in Pushpakvan and for 4 years he underwent penance.

At Pabhosa, the 6th Tirthankar Bhagwan Padmaprabhu went into deep meditation on the thirteenth day of Kartik, after having renounced the world.
Sikh Panth Circuit

Ahrauli Govind Saheb:

The place is of interest due to the association of Govind Shaheb a Saint, who passed his days in meditation here. A religious fair lasting ten days is held here annually in the month of Agraohana, the peak day being the tenth day of Shuklapaksh.

Hem-Kund-Saheb:

It is a sacred lake situated at the heights of 4320 metres and is a pilgrim centre of Sikhs, due to its association with Guru Govind Singhji, who performed the penances at this place. The place can be visited from Govind Ghat through the valley of flowers.

This sacred Sikh shrine is situated on the shores of the Hemkund Lake (4320 mtrs.). Guru Givind Singh, the tenth and last Guru, unified with God after prolonged meditation in his previous birth. The Guru's autobiography which contains, a detailed description of the place helped two devout Sikhs, Sant Sohan Singh and Havldar Mohan Singh to rediscover it. According to Hindu mythology, Hemkund or Lokpal as it is also known, is where Lakshman had done his penance.

Hemkund is a 15 km trek from Govindghat, which is the gateway to the Bhyundar or Lakshman Ganga Valley. Govindghat is on the bus route to Badrinath. The trek from here to Hemkund takes one through forests of pine and rhododendron
where wild roses, ferns and alpine flowers bloom. The surging waters of Lakshman Ganga are also visible. The last 5 km of the trek entails a steep climb from Ghangharia, which is a base for visiting Hemkund.

Hemkund Lake is about 2 km in circumference. Its clear, still waters mirror images of the Saptashringa Peaks (5500 mtrs.) which surround it. Bits of ice still float on the waters between July and October, the best season to visit Hemkund. The rock-strewn shores of the lake are covered with moss and flowers in bloom. Other places of interest are:

**Gurudwara Hemkund Sahib**

This imposing star-shaped structure of stone and concrete masonry is on the shores of the lake. An outlet behind the Gurudwara is the source of the Lakshman Ganga.

Temple of Lord Lakshman, a small temple nearby, dedicated to Lord Lakshman.

**Ghangharia**

Situated in the midst of pine grove, Ghangharia serves as a base for visiting Hemkund Sahib. It is the last human habitation in the valley. A Tourist Lodge, log huts, tents and a gurudwara provide comfortable accommodation.

**Govindghat**

The confluence of the Alaknanda and Bhyundar or Lakshman Ganga. It has an imposing Gurudwara named after Guru Govind Singh.
Eco-Tourism Circuit

Eco-tourism has been defined variously as "on economic process where rare and beautiful ecosystems are marketed", or as "tourism with a specific motive of enjoying wildlife and underdeveloped natural area" or as "purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem." These definitions show two specific trends; in the one, eco-tourism has been viewed as a consumer item and in the other, as a satisfying experience. The definition provided by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) is more exact and comprehensive. According to it, eco-tourism is "tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specified object of studying, admiring and enjoying nature and its wild, plants and animals, as well as existing cultural aspects (both of the past and the present), found in these areas."

Various activities that come under the concept of eco-tourism encompass a wide range of activities that can be termed as outdoor recreation, such as: trekking, hiking, mountaineering, mountain cycling, kayaking, bird-watching, boating, river rafting, skiing, biological explorations and visiting wildlife sanctuaries. Most of these activities are akin to adventure tourism where accent is on deriving thrill out of nature. In adventure tourism generally the young people participate, whereas in eco-tourism the older and mature tourists are involved along with the young. Eco-tourism's
approach is that of looking at nature as something to be appreciated for its own sake. Eco-tourism also differs from mass tourism, or what may be termed as resort tourism, in a significant way. In the latter, the main objective of the tourist is to get away from the usual routine, enjoy a holiday, visit places of historical or tourist interest and go back carrying the memory of a good outing. A majority of these tourists do not feel much inspired by the natural beauty or the cultural uniqueness of the areas unlike eco-tourism in its strictest sense as outlined by WTO.

Mountains provide an effective arena for the conduct of eco-tourism activities. The unique eco-system of the mountains, their grandeur and the awe-inspiring scenic beauty are a source of perennial attraction. In addition trekking, hiking, mountaineering, in fact almost all the eco-tourism activities can be organized on the mountains. Mountains are rich pockets of green. The variety of trees, herbs and flowers is breathtaking. These green pockets are significant in many respects. They not merely add to the beauty of the landscape but they are also an abode of abundant flora and fauna. They are also a treasure of plants, shrubs and herbs of medicinal value. The locals revere these green pockets and traditionally conserve them as sacred groves. Hundreds of sacred groves are scattered all over India in the plains as well as in the mountainous regions. Shipin, about 12 kms from Shimla, in the Himalayas has the biggest deodar grove that is home to trees, hundreds of years old. There are many such groves in the Himalayan region that find mention in Indian ancient scriptures. The Himalayas is India's
natural as well as spiritual heritage. Unfortunately, the ecology of the Himalayas is undergoing fast deterioration and requires immediate attention. It is at this point that eco-tourism with proper management of conservation can help the mountain ecosystem. The mountains have a large variety of animals and birds. Watching them in their natural surroundings in sanctuaries and forest reserves can be a thrilling and educative experience.

Eco-tourism activities on and around the mountains can be grouped as under:

* Outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, mountain cycling, mountaineering, river rafting etc. for small groups.
* Visit to sacred groves and the heritage spots with a conscious effort to understand their religious and cultural significance for the locals.
* Visit to wildlife and bird sanctuaries and national parks.
* Treks to lakes, valleys and snow peaks where possible.
* Staying with the local communities or in the pristine surroundings, watching and appreciating their traditions and culture.

The question arises as to what steps need be taken to make eco-tourism an effective way to fulfill its triple functions; economic, social and environmental? For the success of eco-tourism, there are some cardinal points that should be attended to. It is essential to ensure that tourists desirous of enjoying the benefit of eco-tourism are taken around in small groups; they should be aware and environmental friendly and should be
motivated to admire nature for nature's sake. The areas demarcated for eco-tourism should be exclusively set aside for the purpose and should be well preserved, having natural environment with variegated and thick vegetation, water, historic, ethnic and cultural resources. The activities should be so planned that they are eco-friendly and least damaging to the eco-system. These should also be conducive to the local cultures and should hurt neither the visitors' sentiments nor those of the locals. The local people with knowledge of their culture, traditions and customs should be involved as the key actors in the venture so that they have full participation as also the ability to satisfy the curiosity of the visitors. Uttar Pradesh's official approach is on these lines.

**Dudhwa National Park**

In order to provide suitable conditions for rehabilitation of the magnificent Indian swamp deer and other species of wild life in the north Kheri Division of the district, an area of 212 sq km was declared as Dudwa Sanctuary in 1968. Having considered the flora, fauna, ecological and geomorphological importance and wild life potentials of the area, the Government of Uttar Pradesh has increased the area to 400 sq km and upgraded to the status of a National Park, wherein all forest exploitations have been stopped. This National Park finally came into being on February 1, 1977. It has about 40 tigress, four panthers, 220 sambhars, 2000 swamp deer, 2000 spotted deer, 400 hog deer, 20 barking deer, 1000 wild bears, 70 sloth bears, 10 black bucks, 100 nilgai, 15 crocodile and 22 wild
elephants according to a recent estimate. There are about 400 species of known birds and numerous reptiles and fish.

Dudhwa National Park is easily approachable from Lucknow and Delhi both by rail and road. It is 430 kms from Delhi, the National Capital and 215 kms from Lucknow, the State Capital. Palia Kalan is the nearest town at a distance of 10 kms where postal, hospital and banking facilities exist. The best season to visit the place is between November and May.

Chila wildlife Sanctuary - Chila Wild life Sanctuary, part of Rajaji National Park, covers an area of around 240 sq km. It is open for tourist between 15 Nov. and 15 June. Other sanctuaries are mentioned below:

Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, Kukrail Reserve Forest, Nawab Ganj Bird Sanctuary, Gokhara Hill, Chandra Prabha Sanctuary, Wild Life Sanctuary, Kaimoor Wildlife Sanctuary and Hastinapur Sanctuary.

A panoramic view of Haridwar can be enjoyed from the temple of Chandi Devi located on top of Neel Parvat. The temple is a 3 km trek from Chandi Ghat. Legend has it that Chanda-Munda the army chief of the local demon king, Shumbha-Nishumbha, was killed by Goddess Chandi here. There is a dense forest on the other side of the hill inhabited by elephants and other wild animals.