

# Are you ready for NEW AYODHYA?

As India witnesses the historic opening of the temple in Ayodhya, Times NIE takes you on a trip through the city, once known as Saketa, which has transformed into a new global Ayodhya that welcomes tourists as a 'pilgrimage destination'

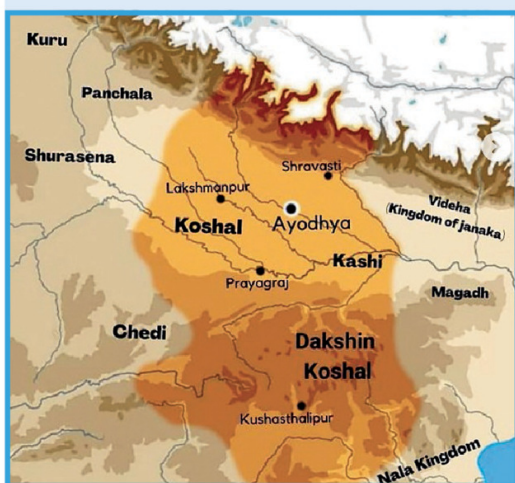
## Tale of historical city of Ayodhya



1 Ayodhya, earlier known as **SAKETA**, is associated with the great epic, Ramayana, and its legend of Lord Rama and the rule of his father, Dashratha.

2 Once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kosala, the city has been home to **RULERS RENOWNED FOR THEIR VALOUR AND ETHICS**, from Ikshvaku and Harishchandra to Raghu and Dashratha. In Buddhist times, around the 5th-6th century, Shravasti became the kingdom's chief city.

3 During the 11th and 12th century, the **KANAUJ KINGDOM** arose in Ayodhya, then called Oudh or Awadh. Later, the region was included in the Delhi Sultanate, the Jaun-

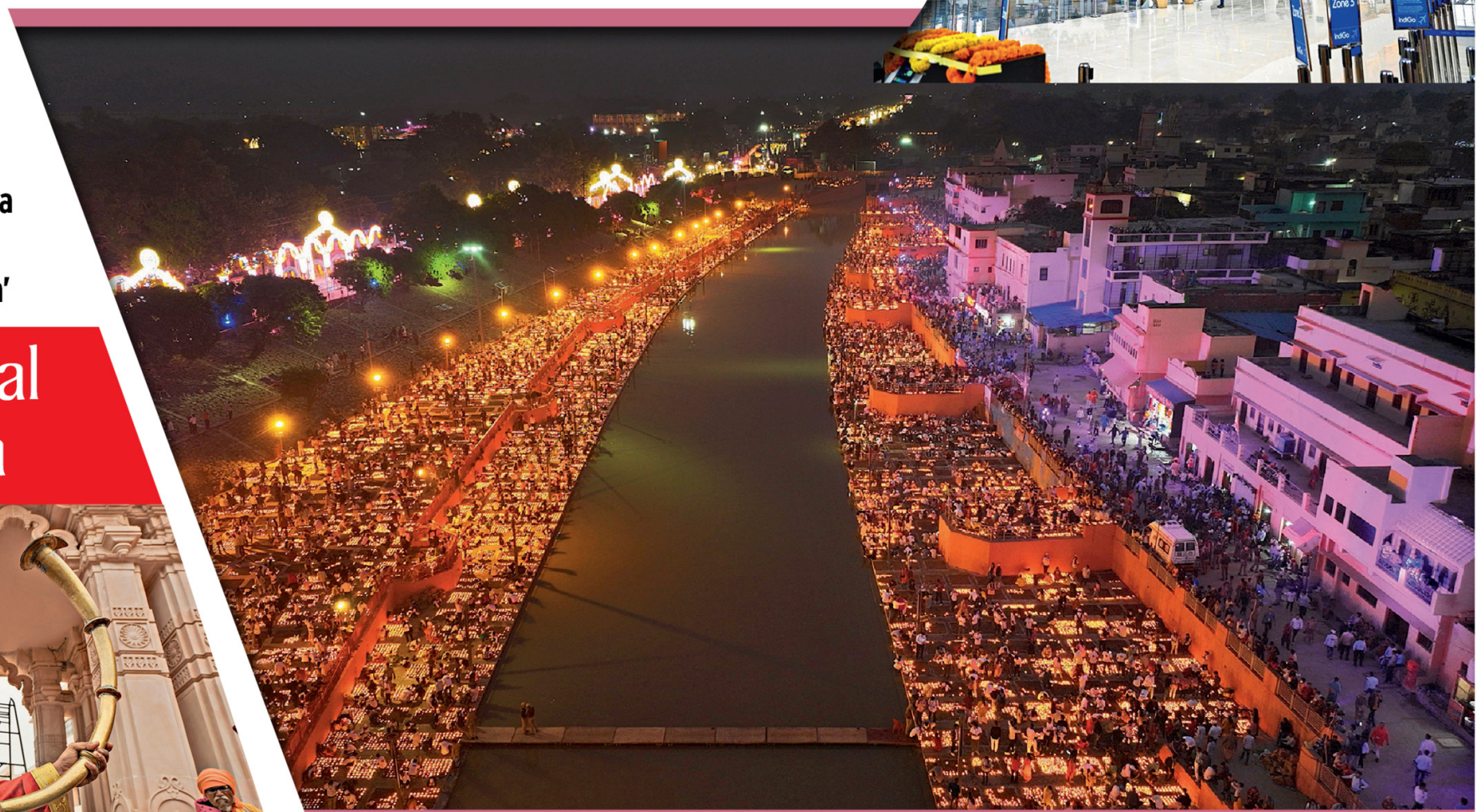


pur kingdom, and in the 16th century, the Mughal Empire.

4 The city, situated on the banks of the **SARAYU RIVER**, is filled with relics of ancient times. The nearby city of Faizabad, located 7km from Ayodhya, was known as Fyzabad. The foundation of the city was laid by Saadat Khan, the second Nawab of Awadh.

5 The long line of ghats on River Sarayu was constructed by **RAJA DARSHAN SINGH** in the first part of the 19th century. Ayodhya or Awadhपुरi has been regarded as the first one of the seven-most important pilgrimage sites or **MOKSHDAYINI SAPT PURIS** for Hindus.

6 References of Ayodhya are also contained in the **ATHARVA VEDA**. In Jain tradition, it is believed that the five Tirthankaras were born in Ayodhya.



## Old town gets a facelift

**CITY OF MAGNIFICENT BUILDINGS:** The word "Saketa" is derived from the Sanskrit words Saha (with) and Aketen (houses or buildings). The Adi Purana states that Ayodhya is called Saketa "because of its magnificent buildings".

**SITA KI RASOI AND HANUMAN GARHI:** A symbolic kitchen known as 'Sita Ki Rasoi' is believed to be the place where Sita, the wife of Lord Rama, used to cook. Hanuman Garhi is a temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman and offers a panoramic view of the city.



**TRETA YUG CAPITAL:** According to Hindu mythology, Ayodhya was the capital of the ancient Kosala Kingdom during the Treta Yuga. In Treta yuga, peo-



Tulsi Smarak Bhawan was constructed in 1969 in memory of 16th-century poet-philosopher Goswami Tulsiidas, who authored the Ramcharitmanas in the Awadhi language

ple were dutiful, moral, and compassionate toward their fellow beings. The four Hindu Yugas are the Satya (or Krita) Yuga, the Treta Yuga, the Dwapara Yuga, and the Kali Yuga. Each Yuga represents a degradation in human spiritual life, followed by a period of renewal and a new Satya Yuga.

◆ **AYODHYA AS A UNESCO HERITAGE SITE:** Ayodhya has been proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its cultural and historical significance.

### Quiz

#### WHO IS GOD OF TRETA YUG?

During Treta Yug, Lord Vishnu was incarnated as Vamana, Parashuram and Sri Ramachandra

**RAMAYANA CIRCUIT:** Ayodhya is part of the Ramayana Circuit, a tourism initiative by the Indian government to promote pilgrimage and tourism related to the ancient epic Ramayana.



**CITY NAMES AFTER AYODHYA:** The cities of Yogyakarta in Indonesia and Ayutthaya in Thailand, are named after Ayodhya.

**SOUTH KOREAN CONNECTION:** South Korea shares a genetic connection with Ayodhya; as the queen of Korea's biggest dynasty princess Heo Hwang-ok was the daughter of Ayodhya who travelled by sea route and married King Kim Suro of Korea's Kara dynasty.

## AS A TOURIST, GO VISIT

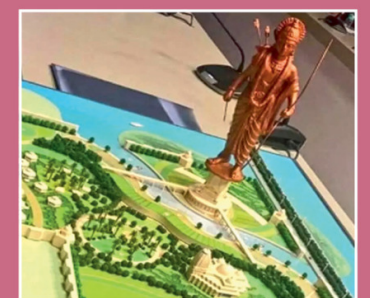
### Sandhya Sarovar

An open-air food zone with diverse restaurants and stalls will feature ambient music, decorative lighting, and three water bodies. Activities like boating, zip line, and slackline will be available.



### Ayodhya Haat

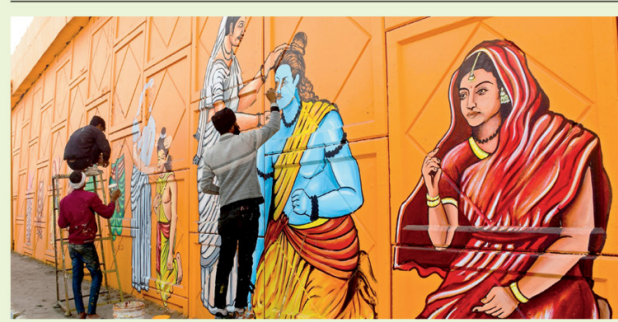
Sarayu riverbanks to enhance tourist experience with developed ghats. Temporary food kiosks, shops featuring art and craft will be the highlight of the haat.



### Ram Heritage Walk

A heritage walk on Ram Path, Ayodhya's 13km road linked to Lucknow-Gorakhpur highway, will feature mural arts on 180 walls. Each 20ft by 9ft mural portrays significant Ramayana events.

## The Transformation



■ About 42 parks in Ayodhya would be illuminated through solar power.

■ Maryada Purushottam Ram International Airport, mirroring the Ram Temple's design, has commenced operations, with direct flights connecting Ayodhya to Delhi.

■ Proposed aero city near the

new airport, spanning 150 acres, includes a hotel complex, wedding venue and Ayurveda city, serving as a wellness destination.

■ Several tent cities in Ayodhya will offer luxurious accommodations for tourists, designed as eco resorts with sustainable practices. A mega foundation park is also in the pipeline.



## THE MAKING OF THE TEMPLE

► The Ram Mandir's design finds its origins in the artistic endeavours of the **SOMPURA FAMILY FROM AHMEDABAD**. Renowned for crafting more than 100 temples worldwide and with a legacy that runs deep across 15 generations, their contributions, notably the Somnath temple, are significant. The Ram Mandir's architectural mastermind is Chandrakant Sompura.

► For the construction of the Ram Temple, **STONES, SOIL, AND WATER CAME FROM**

**ACROSS THE WORLD.** Nepal, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia have sent valued items, reflecting Lord Rama's historical and global connect.

► The temple — spanning 235 feet in width, 360 feet in length, and a height of 161 feet — is poised to become the world's third-largest Hindu shrine.

**Name the world's largest temple structure.**

Ans: Angkor Wat in Cambodia



► A Hyderabad-based firm has crafted the intricately designed wooden doors of the temple, many of them plated with gold. Anuradha Timbers, a 100-year-old company, have built **118 DOORS FOR THE TEMPLE**, including the ones for its inner sanctum.

► Special bricks are made using a unique process to make them stronger and more durable than regular bricks. Local brick kiln owner, Atul Kumar Singh, is producing these **SPECIAL BRICKS THAT ARE EARTHQUAKE RESISTANT**.

► A significant feature of the temple will be its 366 columns. Detailed carvings will depict 16 idols.



of architecture.

► Lord Rama's idol has been sculpted by **ARUN YOGIRAJ** of Mysuru.

► The temple features five mandapas, situated between the sacred garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) and the main entrance. Three mandapas — Kudu, Nritya, and Rang — are on one side, while Kirtan and Prarthana mandapas are on the other. It follows **NAGARA STYLE** (popular in Northern India, with tall pyramidal towers)