

WORKING HAND IN HAND TO SHOWCASE INDIA

The Hindu

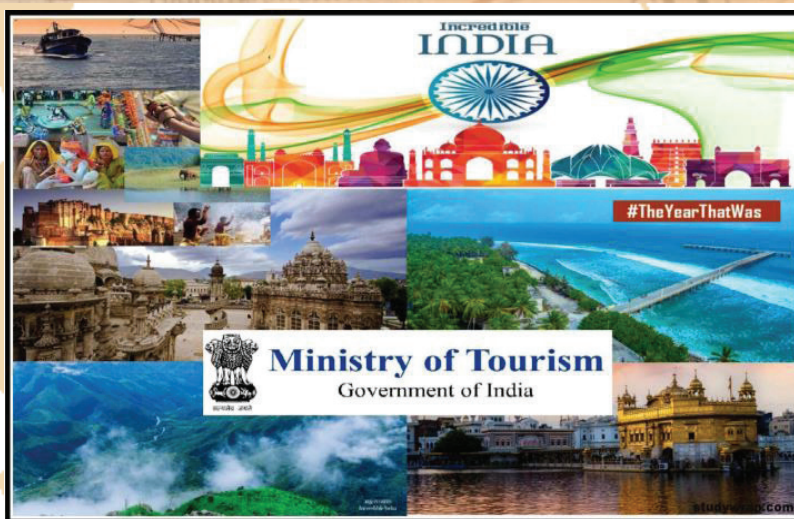
Paper - III
(Indian Economy)

In Context

Today is National Tourism Day (January 25) and the Ministry of Railways, in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, is launching its Jagannath Yatra train package, an eight-day tour that begins in from Delhi, traverses Kashi, Baidyanath Dham, Jagannath Puri, Bhubaneshwar and Konark, and ends at the Vishnupad temple in Gaya.

Efforts to Promote Tourism

- All this is linked to using Bharat Gaurav Trains (or theme-based tourist circuit trains) to highlight India's rich cultural heritage and history. The example given above is one of many cases of a Government of India ministry other than the Tourism Ministry taking the initiative to showcase India's rich heritage using a 'whole of government' approach.
- Today, the Ministry of Tourism coordinates its work effectively with over 20 central government Ministries in the promotion and development of tourism in the country. In October 2022, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Home Affairs organised the National Conference on Tourist Police (to develop tourist-specific policing), aimed at working with the police and sensitising them on addressing the needs of foreign and domestic tourists.
- In partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Tourism Ministry has begun establishing 'Yuva Tourism' clubs to nurture young ambassadors of Indian tourism. In another instance, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is aiming to make India an attractive cruise tourism destination using state-of-the-art infrastructure.
- India's middle class is now prioritising some of their discretionary spending on new experiences such as cruises. In partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, tourism officers have



been placed in 20 Indian missions in countries that contribute to some of the highest foreign tourist arrivals in India. Their role includes facilitating and providing inputs for country-specific sensibilities and having them reflected in tourism products.

- Similarly, with the Ministry of Roadways and the Petroleum Ministry, steps are being taken to ensure that highways and fuel stations have clean sanitation infrastructure. The Ministry of Tourism is also funding several commercial flight routes in partnership with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, making them viable.

Status of the tourism sector in India

- India ranks 6th according to the World Travel and Tourism Council in terms of Travel & Tourism's total contribution to GDP in 2021. India 2021 was ranked 54th in World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index.
- India has 40 sites listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (32 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed) as of 1st January 2023. Dholavira and Ramappa Temple are the latest ones.
- A total of 39 million jobs were created in the tourism sector in FY20, which represented 8% of the country's employment. By 2029, it will account for 53 million jobs.

Recent Initiatives in the tourism sector:

- Swadesh Darshan Scheme: Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits around Specific Themes
- Dekho Apna Desh Initiative
- National Green Tourism Mission
- PRASHAD scheme: Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive
- Buddhist Conclave
- Adopt A Heritage Project: 'Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan'

Why in news?

Apart from the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of the Government of India is taking initiatives to showcase the rich heritage of India using a 'Whole of Government' approach.

Tourism

Tourism is the action and process of spending time away from home in pursuit of recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment, using the commercial provision of services. Tourism is a product of modern social systems, beginning in Western Europe in the 17th century, although classical antiquity is its predecessor.

What is the new draft of the National Tourism Policy 2022?

- Vision - The vision of the policy is to make India one of the top destinations for sustainable and responsible tourism while providing a world-class visitor experience to our tourist destinations.
- Objective - The objective of the draft policy is to improve the status of the framework for tourism development, support tourism industries, strengthen tourism support functions and develop tourism sub-sectors.
- The policy has been formulated keeping in mind the future projections for the tourism sector with the vision of India @ 100. It is built around 6 Key Guiding Principles, 5 National Tourism Missions, and 8 Strategic Pillars.

- Development of Iconic Tourist Sites
- Incredible India 2.0 Campaign of the Union Ministry of Tourism etc.

Tourism Policy-2022

- However, it is not just enough if there is a pledge to work together as this needs to be formalised through structures and institutions. The new draft of National Tourism Policy 2022 aims to do just this. The policy has been formulated after situational analysis including the impact of COVID-19 and taking into account future projections for the tourism sector with a vision for India@100.
- One of the ideas includes an institutional structure that can take concurrent and coordinated action across the Union, State and local government levels in partnership with industry.
- It is this 'whole of government' approach that has equipped India with the ability to host the G-20 presidency — 20 countries, 11 special invitee countries, and nearly one lakh delegates will participate in 200 meetings at over 50 locations. Every delegate or visitor who is in India to attend the G-20 summit will return as a brand ambassador and spread the word about India's rich cultural, spiritual and natural heritage.

Promoted as a Global Tourism Market

- Moving ahead on this, the Ministry of Tourism declaration of "Visit India Year 2023" aims to promote various tourism products and destinations to increase India's share in the global tourism market.
- Data show that domestic tourism has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, even exceeding it in some cases. This is evident in a record 1.84 crore domestic tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir in 2022. Similarly, foreign tourist arrivals are expected to reach pre-pandemic levels.

Key Guiding Principles

- Promoting sustainable, responsible, and inclusive tourism
- Promoting digitization, innovation, and technology in the tourism sector
- follow a whole-of-government approach
- private sector-led growth
- To promote Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat
- Adhering to a destination-centric and tourism-centric approach

National Tourism Mission

- National Tourism Mission
- National Green Tourism Mission
- National Digital Tourism Mission
- Regional Mission on Skill Development
- National Mission on Destination Management
- National Mission on Tourism MSMEs

Potential and possibilities of tourism: -

- Tourism in India has emerged as a means of income and employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. It contributes 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India. About 20 million people are now working in India's tourism industry.
- Tourism is an important source of foreign exchange earnings in India. This has a favorable effect on the country's balance of payments. The tourism industry in India generated approximately US\$100 billion in 2008 and is expected to grow to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at an annual growth rate of 9.4%.
- According to the World Tourism Organization, the sector provides 10 percent of the world's GDP and 7 percent of global trade, and creates one in every 11 jobs worldwide.
- The travel and tourism sector in India has the potential to grow very rapidly and support 46 million jobs by 2025, provided the right investments and policies are put in place
- The plan to develop 10 tourist destinations under the AMRUT program to attract more people and enhance facilities in the country is a testimony to the intention in the right direction.

Conclusion

- India is a tourist destination to rekindle one's inner self. As the birthplace to four major world religions, i.e., Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, India can truly claim to be the world's spiritual beacon. This is at the core of the Visit India Year 2023.

- Travelling to India is not just a tourism experience. It is an avenue to find oneself. India has always been a popular destination for travellers exploring spiritual enlightenment and self-discovery.

For centuries many great foreign travellers have visited India and shared their experiences in the form of memoirs, travelogues, poetry and books, as Megasthenes, Hiuen-Tsang, Marco Polo, and Fa-Hien have shown.

“Dharamshala Declaration” 2022 on Tourism

The following goals have been kept under this manifesto -

- By 2024, the position of the tourism sector before the Kovid epidemic is to be achieved, as well as a target of contributing US \$ 150 billion to the GDP
- The tourism sector is targeted to contribute \$ 250 billion to the GDP by 2030, as well as create 140 million jobs in the tourism sector.
- A target has been set to make India the world's leader in tourism by 2047. It also includes a long-term revenue target of \$1 trillion by 2047 when the country completes 100 years.

Expected Question

Que. Which of the following schemes is not related to tourism?

- (a) Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- (b) Jal Shakti Abhiyan.
- (c) Prasad Scheme.
- (d) Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Programme.

Answer : B

Mains Expected Question & Format

Que.: How can mountain ecosystems be restored from the negative effects of development initiatives and tourism?

Answer Format :

- ❖ Explain the possibilities of tourism related development from the perspective of India.
- ❖ Discuss the negative impact of tourism.
- ❖ Give a balanced conclusion.

Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC mains examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.