



TOURISM SCHEMES 2026 PRELIMS

1. Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0):

Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0) is a **flagship central sector scheme** launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** to shift India's tourism strategy from theme-based circuits to a **destination-centric model**.

Aims and Objectives

- **Destination-Centric Approach:** Moves away from broad circuits (like the Buddhist or Coastal circuits) to the holistic development of specific high-potential destinations.
- **Sustainable & Responsible Tourism:** Focuses on environmental, socio-cultural, and economic sustainability.
- **Vocal for Local:** Aligns with *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* by enhancing local economies, creating jobs, and improving local community skills.
- **Private Investment:** Aims to increase private sector participation in hospitality and asset management.

Funding and Administration

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Tourism](#).
- **Type of Scheme:** **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Funding Mechanism:** Financial assistance is provided as **Grant-in-aid** to States and UTs.
- **Implementing Agencies:** While the Centre provides funds, projects are implemented by **State Governments and UT Administrations**. Operation and Management (O&M) are the responsibility of the respective states.

Key Features

- **Sub-Schemes:** Includes **Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD)** and the development of **Homestays in Tribal Areas** under *Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM-JUGA)*.
- **Holistic Development:** Covers infrastructure, digital connectivity, branding, and skill development.
- **Smart Planning:** Emphasizes data-driven planning and the use of eco-friendly materials and renewable energy.

Update as of 2026

- **Project Portfolio:** As of early 2026, the Ministry has sanctioned **53 projects** under SD2.0 with a total outlay of approximately **₹2,208.31 crore**.
- **Sub-Scheme Progress:** Under the CBDD initiative, **38 projects** worth around **₹698 crore** have been sanctioned across categories like spiritual, cultural, and eco-tourism.
- **Extension:** The scheme is currently approved until **March 2026**.

Achievements

- **Completed Legacy Projects:** Nearly all projects from the original Swadesh Darshan 1.0 (75 out of 76) have been physically completed as of 2026.
- **Infrastructure Expansion:** Sanctioned major new projects like the **Shivshrushti Theme Park** in Pune and **Ahmednagar Fort** development in Maharashtra.



- **Data Integration:** Introduced the **Project Management Information System (PMIS)** to improve transparency and tracking through time-stamped photographs.

Criticisms

- **Sluggish Implementation:** Reports as of April 2026 indicate that **84% of sanctioned projects** are still at a "nascent stage," with less than 25% physical completion.
- **Coordination Issues:** Delays have been largely attributed to poor coordination between the Central Ministry and State Governments.
- **Sustainability Challenges:** Critics point to the difficulty of balancing rapid infrastructure growth with genuine environmental conservation and local community engagement

2. Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD):

The **Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD)** scheme is a specialized initiative launched in **2023** to create world-class, sustainable tourism destinations through a competitive selection process.

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Core Framework & Classification (as of 2026)

- **Ministry:** Under the **Ministry of Tourism**, Government of India.
- **Classification:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Status:** It functions as a **sub-scheme** under the umbrella of **Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD 2.0)**, which is the Ministry's flagship scheme.
- **Implementing Agency:** Executed by **State Implementing Agencies** (typically state tourism departments or boards).

Aims and Objectives

The primary goal is the **holistic development** of destinations to enhance the entire tourist value chain rather than building isolated infrastructure. Key objectives include:

- **Sustainable & Responsible Tourism:** Transitioning destinations toward eco-friendly and culturally sensitive models.
- **End-to-End Visitor Experience:** Uplifting every touchpoint—from arrival and local mobility to accommodation and digital interpretation.
- **Vocal for Local:** Promoting local products, supporting tourism MSMEs, and fostering community engagement.

Key Features & Selection Process

- **Competitive Challenge:** Unlike regular schemes where every state receives a quota, CBDD requires states to compete by submitting themed proposals.
- **Thematic Focus:** Projects are sanctioned under four specific themes:
 1. **Culture & Heritage**
 2. **Spiritual Tourism**
 3. **Ecotourism and Amrit Dharohar Sites** (Wetlands/Biodiversity)



4. **Vibrant Villages Program** (Frontier tourism)

- **Funding Mechanism:** Financial assistance is provided as **grants-in-aid** for capital investment. Operation and Maintenance (O&M) costs must be borne by the respective State or UT.

2026 Update & Achievements

- **Project Reach:** As of mid-2026, the Ministry has sanctioned **38 projects** worth approximately **₹697.94 crore** across India.
- **Milestones:** Notable sanctioned projects include the **Buddhist Heritage Experience** at Nagarjuna Sagar (₹25 Cr) and **Frontier Tourism** in Kibithoo, Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Timeline:** The current phase of the scheme is approved until **March 2026**, with many projects currently in the implementation or "mission mode" stage.

Criticism and Challenges

- **Capacity Gaps:** Smaller states sometimes struggle with the complex "destination-centric" proposal requirements compared to larger states with more resources.
- **Sustainability vs. Scale:** Critics argue that rapid infrastructure expansion at sensitive "Amrit Dharohar" (wetland) sites could conflict with long-term ecological conservation.
- **O&M Burden:** While the Center provides 100% capital funding, states often find the ongoing **operation and maintenance (O&M)** costs difficult to sustain without high entry fees, which can deter budget travelers

3. **PRASHAD Scheme:**

The **PRASHAD Scheme** (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive) is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched in 2014–15 by the **Ministry of Tourism**. It focuses on the holistic development of identified pilgrimage and heritage sites to enrich the religious tourism experience through infrastructure and world-class amenities.

Core Objectives & Features

- **Aims:** To integrate pilgrimage destinations in a planned and sustainable manner, enhancing the infrastructure at sacred sites while preserving their religious and historical essence.
- **Objectives:**
 - Harness tourism for **employment generation** and local economic growth.
 - Develop **world-class infrastructure** like roads, last-mile connectivity, and sanitation.
 - Promote local arts, crafts, culture, and cuisine.
 - Improve **safety and security** (e.g., CCTV, lighting) and accessibility (e.g., pedestrian pathways).
- **Key Features:** Focuses strictly on tourism infrastructure and visitor amenities (waiting halls, first aid centers) rather than religious or ritual works.

Funding & Implementation

- **Funding Mechanism:** It is a **100% centrally funded** scheme for eligible project components. It also encourages additional contributions through **CSR** and **PPP models**.



UNIQUE UPSC CIVIL SERVICE (IAS/IPS...) COACHING INSTITUTION

ONLINE COURSE DETAILS

Duration : 12 months

Mode : Through online class

Timing : 9.00 p.m to 10.30 p.m

Total Fees structure income slab wise:

Below ₹1 lakh per annum	: ₹3000/-
Between ₹1 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh pa	: ₹6000/-
Between ₹2.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh pa	: ₹12000/-
Between ₹5 lakh to ₹7 lakh pa	: ₹24000/-
Between ₹7 lakh to ₹8 lakh pa	: ₹36000/-
Between ₹8 lakh pa to ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹50000/-
Above ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹60000/-

Course include:

- Inclusive coverage of all Preliminary subjects (includes CSAT)
- Inclusive coverage of all Mains subject (includes Ethics subject)
- Monthly preliminary mock test

NOTE: Income here include individual's self income and family income

OFFLINE COURSE DETAILS

Duration : 12 month (paid) + Free access to all till succeeding in civil service exam

Mode : Physical classroom+ Online

Timing : 7.30 a.m to 9.30 p.m

Total Fees structure income slab wise:

Below ₹1 lakh per annum	: ₹6000/-
Between ₹1 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh pa	: ₹12000/-
Between ₹2.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh pa	: ₹24000/-
Between ₹5 lakh to ₹7 lakh pa	: ₹36000/-
Between ₹7 lakh to ₹8 lakh pa	: ₹50000/-
Between ₹8 lakh pa to ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹60000/-
Above ₹10 lakh pa	: ₹80000/-

Course includes:

- Includes above all Online course features
- Regular mains writing practice and mock test
- Regular mock interviews
- Regular intensive current affairs discussion
- Skill development course includes spoken English)
- Topic wise group discussions
- Ethics based leaders stage talk
- Real time one to one mentorship
- Regular Subject wise seminars
- Access to library and books

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- **Implementing Agency:** While funded centrally, projects are executed by the **respective State Governments or Union Territory Administrations.**
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme.** It is considered a **flagship initiative** of the Ministry of Tourism.

2026 Status & Achievements

- **Project Count:** As of February 2026, the Ministry has sanctioned **54 projects** across 28 States/UTs with an estimated cost of approximately **₹1,726.74 crore.**
- **Completion Rate:** Roughly **31 projects** have been fully completed, including major sites like the Somnath promenade in Gujarat.
- **Budget 2025–26:** Allocated **₹240 crore** specifically for completing ongoing projects.



- **Socio-economic Impact:** Boosted local employment and strengthened ancillary industries (hospitality, handicrafts) at hubs like Puri, Amritsar, and Ajmer.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Implementation Delays:** Legacy projects in states like Odisha have faced persistent delays due to bureaucratic bottlenecks and execution issues.
- **Post-Completion Maintenance:** Concerns exist regarding the long-term upkeep of facilities once they are handed over to local authorities or religious trusts.
- **State-Level Coordination:** Recurrent issues in coordination between central planning and state-level execution have occasionally slowed project momentum.
- **Public Awareness:** Awareness remains limited in rural or less-developed regions, which can restrict broader community participation in the tourism economy

4. Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI):

The **Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI)** is a flagship initiative of the Government of India designed to provide long-term, interest-free financial support to states for high-impact infrastructure and reform projects.

Overview (Updated as of 2026)

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure).
- **Implementing Agency:** State Government Agencies (under central monitoring by line ministries like Tourism, Commerce, etc.).
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** because it is 100% funded by the Union Government through loans that do not require a state matching share.
- **Nature:** It is a **flagship umbrella scheme** comprising several "Parts" targeting diverse sectors like tourism, urban reforms, and digital infrastructure.
- **2026-27 Update:** The scheme has been redesigned and extended for **FY 2026-27** with a record allocation of **₹2,00,000 crore**.

Aims, Objectives, and Funding

- **Objective:** To stimulate economic recovery and growth by boosting capital expenditure (Capex), which has a high multiplier effect on GDP (estimated at ₹3 for every ₹1 spent).
- **Aims:**
 - Transforming states into drivers of global-scale development (e.g., "Iconic Tourist Centres").
 - Incentivising difficult structural reforms in land, mining, and urban planning.
- **Funding Mechanism:** **50-year interest-free loans** provided above the normal Net Borrowing Ceiling (NBC) of the states.

Key Features

- **Multi-Sectoral Structure:** Divided into parts, such as:
 - **Untied Funds:** For general capital projects based on state priority.



- **Reform-Linked Funds:** Earmarked for achievements in areas like **Bhu-Aadhar** (land records), urban planning, and scrapping of old vehicles.
- **Iconic Tourism:** Development of 40 global-standard tourist centres.
- **Challenge-Based Selection:** States compete for certain funds by submitting high-quality project proposals.
- **Strict Timelines:** Projects typically must be completed within **two years**.

Achievements (As of 2026)

- **Massive Financial Inflow:** Total releases since inception (2020-21) reached approximately **₹4.5 lakh crore** by early 2026.
- **Land Reforms:** 90% of cadastral maps geo-referenced nationwide and 30% of land parcels assigned **Bhu-Aadhar** (ULPIN).
- **Infrastructure Growth:** Successful completion of 40 iconic tourism projects across 23 states as of early 2025.
- **Fiscal Discipline:** Incentivised states to maintain capex at roughly **2.4% of GDP**.

Criticism

- **State Revenue Stagnation:** Critics note that while SASCI has increased total capex, capital spending from **states' own revenues** has remained largely flat, suggesting a dependency on central loans.
- **Rigid Reform Windows:** Some states struggle to meet the strict "reform-linked" criteria by year-end deadlines (e.g., December), leading to delayed fund releases.
- **Repayment Concerns:** Although interest-free, the principal is a long-term liability that future state generations must repay.
- **Administrative Burden:** The "challenge method" and multiple "Parts" create high compliance and reporting requirements for state bureaucracies.

5. Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA):

The **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA)**, also known as the **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA)**, is India's largest tribal development initiative, launched on **October 2, 2024**. It is designed to achieve saturation in tribal-majority villages through the convergence of multiple government schemes.

Core Identity and Classification

- **Ministry:** The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** serves as the nodal agency.
- **Implementing Agencies:** A "whole-of-government" approach involving **17 line ministries** that execute 25 specific interventions. At the state level, the **Tribal Welfare Department** acts as the nodal body.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**, meaning the cost is shared between the Centre and States.
- **Flagship/Umbrella Status:** It is a **flagship scheme** that acts as an **umbrella-like convergence platform**, integrating existing programs from 17 ministries to bridge infrastructure and social gaps.



Aims and Objectives

The mission aims to benefit over **5 crore tribal people** across **63,843 villages** in 549 districts.

- **Goal 1: Enabling Infrastructure:** Providing 20 lakh pucca houses under PMAY-G, 25,000 km of road connectivity via PMGSY, and 100% electrification and tap water.
- **Goal 2: Economic Empowerment:** Promoting tribal homestays through [Ministry of Tourism](#), enhancing skilling, and securing land rights via the Forest Rights Act (FRA).
- **Goal 3: Universal Education:** Constructing 1,000 hostels and improving Gross Enrolment Ratios for ST students.
- **Goal 4: Healthy Life:** Deploying Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) and establishing centres for Sickle Cell Disease management.

Funding Mechanism

- **Total Outlay:** ₹79,156 crore for a five-year period (2024-25 to 2028-29).
- **Funding Split:** The Central government contributes ₹56,333 crore, while States provide ₹22,823 crore.
- **Source:** Funds are drawn from the **Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST)** of the respective ministries.

2026 Update: Achievements & Criticism

Achievements (as of May 2026):

- **Homestay Development:** Launch of the "Development of Homestays in Tribal Areas" sub-scheme, providing up to ₹5 lakh for village community needs and ₹3-5 lakh for individual household room construction/renovation.
- **Saturation Reach:** Progress in mapping tribal villages on the [PM Gati Shakti Portal](#) to track gap-filling in real-time.
- **Infrastructure:** Significant progress toward the target of 20 lakh houses and expanded road networks.

Criticisms/Challenges:

- **Implementation Gaps:** Historically, despite large DAPST allocations (which reached ₹1.2 lakh crore in 2023-24), significant infrastructure deficits persist in tribal areas.
- **Land Security:** While aiming to issue 22 lakh FRA titles, many tribal communities still face displacement from development projects and lack formal land titles.
- **Health and Literacy:** ST literacy (59%) and child stunting (40.9%) remain significantly worse than national averages, requiring more than just infrastructure to fix

6. MUDRA Loans for Homestays:

The **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)** is a flagship **Central Sector Scheme** designed to provide collateral-free credit to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro-enterprises. In the **2025-26 Union Budget**,



the government specifically expanded its scope to include **Homestays** as an eligible service activity to boost rural and small-town tourism.

Core Framework of MUDRA for Homestays

- **Ministry:** Overseen by the [Department of Financial Services \(DFS\)](#), **Ministry of Finance**.
- **Implementing Agency:** **MUDRA Ltd.**, a subsidiary of the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), acts as the nodal refinancing body.
- **Funding Mechanism:** It is a **Refinance Model**. MUDRA does not lend directly; instead, it provides refinancing support to **Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** like Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), NBFCs, and MFIs.
- **Scheme Classification:** It is an **Umbrella Flagship Scheme** that brings various micro-credit programs under one brand.

Key Features for Homestays (As of 2026 Update)

- **Loan Categories:** Loans are offered in four stages to reflect business growth:
 - **Shishu:** Up to ₹50,000 (Initial setup/basic upgrades).
 - **Kishore:** Above ₹50,000 to ₹5 Lakh (Expansion/renovation).
 - **Tarun:** Above ₹5 Lakh to ₹10 Lakh (Commercial scaling).
 - **Tarun Plus:** Up to ₹20 Lakh (For established units with a solid repayment history).
- **Eligibility for Homestays:**
 - **Incredible India Registration:** Borrowers must have valid Gold or Silver certification from the [Ministry of Tourism](#).
 - **Udyam Registration:** A mandatory Udyam certificate for the micro-enterprise.
 - **Physical Residency:** For "Incredible India Homestay," the owner must reside in the same establishment.
- **Nature of Facility:** Can be used for **Term Loans** (renovation/construction) or **Working Capital** via the [MUDRA RuPay Card](#).
- **Collateral & Margin:** No collateral security is required for loans up to ₹10 Lakh. For loans above ₹50,000, a margin of **25%** is generally required.

Achievements (Updated May 2026)

- **Cumulative Impact:** Over **57.79 crore loans** have been sanctioned since 2015, totaling over **₹40.07 lakh crore**.
- **Financial Year 2025-26:** As of March 31, 2026, **4.93 crore loans** were sanctioned in this fiscal year alone, amounting to approximately **₹6.04 lakh crore**.
- **Social Inclusion:**
 - **Women Empowerment:** Approx. **70%** of total PMMY beneficiaries are women.
 - **Marginalized Communities:** Over **50%** of accounts are held by SC, ST, and OBC entrepreneurs.



- **Tourism Specifics:** The expansion into homestays is estimated to create a **₹1,500 crore credit opportunity** in the Shishu category alone, with potential for up to ₹8,250 crore if scaled to Kishore.

Criticisms and Challenges

- **"Missing Middle":** A heavy concentration (over 70% by volume) remains in the **Shishu** category, suggesting that many micro-units struggle to graduate into larger, sustainable businesses.
- **Credit Absorption:** Concerns exist regarding the borrowers' capacity to effectively utilize capital due to a lack of technical and hospitality-specific skills.
- **Last-Mile Hurdles:** Homestay operators in remote or rural areas frequently report difficulties with **complex documentation** and low awareness among local bank branches

7. "Heal in India" & Medical Tourism:

The **"Heal in India"** initiative is a multi-sectoral government program launched to position India as the global hub for **Medical Value Travel (MVT)** and wellness tourism. As of 2026, it serves as a central pillar of India's strategy to capture a projected **\$13 billion** medical tourism market.

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Core Identity & Administration

- **Nodal Ministry:** Primarily led by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** in close collaboration with the **Ministry of Ayush**.
- **Implementing Agency:** The **National Health Authority (NHA)**, which manages the initiative under the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** framework. Technical development is supported by **C-DAC** and the **Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC)**.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (specifically through the **Champion Service Sector Scheme for MVT**), meaning it is 100% funded and implemented by the Central Government.
- **Scope:** It is an **Umbrella Initiative** that coordinates various sub-schemes like the "Heal by India" program (for human resource mobility) and the Ayush Visa category.

Aims, Objectives & Features

- **Primary Aim:** To make India the #1 destination for both modern and traditional (Ayush) medical treatments.
- **Key Objectives:**
 - Streamline the patient journey from discovery to post-treatment care.
 - Standardize treatment package costs and enhance transparency.
 - Promote India's unique traditional healing systems (Ayurveda, Yoga) alongside advanced clinical care.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Funded through the **Champion Service Sector Scheme**, which provides financial assistance such as **interest subsidies** to private investors for building super-specialty hospitals. The 2026-27 budget allocated approximately **₹10,000 crore** toward developing regional medical hubs.
- **Distinct Features:**



- **One-Step Digital Portal:** A single window for foreigners to find accredited hospitals, check prices, and apply for visas.
- **Medical Visa Simplification:** Introduction of the specialized **Ayush Visa** and streamlined e-medical visas.
- **Patient Support:** Health desks at 10 major Indian airports (e.g., Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru) providing language interpreters and logistics aid.

2026 Update & Achievements

- **Regional Medical Hubs:** Five new integrated hubs house medical, research, and Ayush facilities under one roof.
- **Patient Volume:** India now welcomes over **2.5 million international patients** annually.
- **Accreditation Growth:** Over **1,299 hospitals** are now NABH-accredited, ensuring high safety standards for foreign visitors.
- **Skill Building:** A 2026 pilot scheme is upskilling **10,000 guides** and paramedical staff in cross-cultural sensitivities and foreign languages.

Criticisms

- **Urban-Rural Divide:** Critics argue the focus on high-end private hospitals for international patients may divert resources from basic rural healthcare infrastructure.
- **Market Competition:** India faces stiff competition from established hubs like Thailand and Turkey, particularly regarding "wellness" branding versus India's "clinical" reputation.
- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Despite the portal, international patients sometimes report delays in the coordination between private hospital packages and official visa processing times.

8. Modified UDAN Scheme (2026–2036):

The **Modified UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) Scheme (2026–2036)** is a 10-year extension and revamp of India's flagship regional connectivity program, approved by the Union Cabinet on **March 25, 2026**, with a total outlay of **₹28,840 crore**.

Aims and Objectives

- **Democratise Aviation:** Make air travel affordable and accessible for common citizens.
- **Enhance Connectivity:** Link unserved and underserved regions, focusing on **Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities**.
- **Long-term Sustainability:** Address high "route mortality" by extending support to ensure airlines become self-sustaining over time.
- **Support Strategic Visions:** Align with **Viksit Bharat 2047** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat** by promoting indigenous aerospace manufacturing.

Key Features

- **Infrastructure Push:** Development of **100 new airports** from existing unserved airstrips and **200 modern helipads** in hilly and remote regions.



- **Extended VGF Support:** Subsidy (Viability Gap Funding) for airline operators is increased from **3 years to 5 years** to allow routes more time to mature.
- **O&M Support:** For the first time, the government will provide **Operation & Maintenance (O&M) support** for three years to small aerodromes.
- **Atmanirbhar Aviation:** Direct procurement of indigenous aircraft like **HAL Dhruv helicopters** and **HAL Dornier planes** to improve fleet availability.
- **Challenge Mode:** Infrastructure development will follow a "challenge mode" approach for competitive selection.

Institutional Framework

- **Nodal Ministry:** [Ministry of Civil Aviation \(MoCA\)](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **flagship scheme** of the MoCA. While it involves state cooperation (tax waivers), the primary funding for the 2026–36 phase is through **direct budgetary support** from the Central Government.

Funding Mechanism

- **Shift to Budgetary Support:** Moving away from the previous "RCS levy" on trunk routes, the new phase is funded by the **Central Exchequer** with an outlay of **₹28,840 crore**.
- **Viability Gap Funding (VGF):** Allocated **₹10,043 crore** over 10 years to bridge the gap between operating costs and capped airfares.
- **Incentives:** Waived landing/parking charges and capped VAT (1% or less) and excise duty (2%) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF).

Achievements (as of February 2026)

- **663 routes** operationalised across **95 airports**, heliports, and water aerodromes.
- Over **1.62 crore (16.2 million)** passengers flown on more than **3.41 lakh** flights.
- Expansion of India's airport network from **74 in 2014 to 159 in 2024**.

Criticism and Challenges

- **High Route Discontinuation:** Data as of 2026 shows that **327 out of 663 routes** (roughly 50%) have been discontinued.
- **Low Viability:** Reports indicate that only **7–10%** of routes remain commercially viable after subsidies end.
- **Fleet Issues:** A persistent shortage of small fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters has hampered the operationalisation of many awarded routes.
- **Safety & Manpower:** Concerns raised regarding aviation safety, DGCA manpower shortages, and the lack of a robust passenger rights framework

9. Tourist Guide Upskilling Pilot Scheme:



The **Tourist Guide Upskilling Pilot Scheme**, announced in the **Union Budget 2026-27**, is a strategic initiative by the Government of India designed to professionalise the tourism sector and create a robust talent pipeline.

Core Details of the Scheme

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Tourism.
- **Implementing Agency:** The primary implementing partners are the **Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs)**, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management (IITTM), Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), and the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, as it is funded and managed directly by the Central Government via the Ministry of Tourism.
- **Classification:** It currently functions as a **Pilot Scheme** under the broader **Incredible India** flagship initiatives, complementing existing programs like the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (IITF).

Aims and Objectives

- **Upskilling Workforce:** Train **10,000 tourist guides** across **20 iconic tourist sites**.
- **Standardization:** Develop professionally trained, knowledgeable, and responsible guides through a high-quality, standardized curriculum.
- **Employment Generation:** Create sustainable, well-paying jobs by enhancing the value and quality of guiding services.
- **Global Benchmarking:** Align certification with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) and National Credit Framework (NCrF) to meet international standards.

Key Features

- **12-Week Hybrid Model:** Combines classroom instruction, field training, and digital modules.
- **Standardized Curriculum:** Focuses on communication, local history, storytelling, safety protocols, and management principles.
- **IIM Partnership:** Leverages the management expertise of IIMs (e.g., IIM Nagpur focusing on forest/wildlife tourism; [IIM Indore](#) on general tourism workforce).
- **Digital Integration:** Complemented by a **National Destination Digital Knowledge Grid** to document cultural and spiritual sites for guide resources.

Update as of 2026

- **Rollout Status:** The scheme was formally launched in the 2026-27 Budget and is currently in the active training phase.
- **Geographic Expansion:** 20 iconic sites have been identified, including locations in Andhra Pradesh and North-Eastern states.

Achievements and Criticisms



Category	Details
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|---------------------|---|
| Achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid partnership with top-tier IIMs for high-level management training. • Alignment with NSQF ensures national and potentially international recognition for local guides. • Integrated approach with digital platforms like the Digital Knowledge Grid. |
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| Criticisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalability Concerns: Experts argue 10,000 guides is a low target given India's vast tourism potential. • Infrastructure Gaps: Critics point out that upskilled guides cannot overcome structural issues like poor hygiene, safety, and visa complexities at iconic sites. • Digital Divide: The heavy reliance on hybrid/digital models may exclude older, established guides who lack digital literacy. |
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10. Chalo India:

As of **May 2026**, the **Chalo India Global Diaspora Campaign** remains a primary pillar of India's international tourism strategy, focusing on leveraging the 30-million-strong global Indian diaspora as "Incredible India Ambassadors".

Aims and Objectives

- **Increase Global Share:** Significantly boost India's share in the global tourism market by encouraging word-of-mouth recommendations from trusted sources.
- **Promote Cultural Heritage:** Showcase diverse cultural, spiritual, and natural heritage sites, including lesser-known destinations.
- **Jan Bhagidari:** Foster a sense of "Citizen Participation" by turning overseas Indians into active promoters of their homeland.
- **Target 2047:** Part of the larger roadmap to reach **100 million international visitors** by the year 2047.

Administrative Framework

- **Ministry:** Under the **Ministry of Tourism**, Government of India.
- **Implementing Agency:** The **Ministry of Tourism** directly implements the campaign in coordination with **Indian Missions overseas** and the travel trade industry.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is **100% funded and implemented** by the Central Government.
- **Nature:** It is a **Flagship Campaign** of the Ministry of Tourism, often linked with broader umbrella-like initiatives such as *Dekho Apna Desh* to boost overall tourism.



Key Features & Funding

- **Referral Rewards:** Diaspora members register on the Chalo India Portal and refer non-Indian friends.
- **Gratis e-Tourist Visas:** For the year 2025-26, the government extended the offer of **1,00,000 free e-visas** (visa fee waiver) for foreign tourists referred through the program.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Fully funded via the Union Budget's allocation to the Ministry of Tourism, specifically for promotional and publicity activities overseas.

Achievements (Updated May 2026)

- **Global Reach:** Expanded to over **167 countries** with streamlined e-visa sub-categories for medical, yoga (Ayush), and business travel.
- **Digital Integration:** Successful rollout of the *Chalo India* portal, allowing real-time tracking of referrals and rewards.
- **Hospitality Synergy:** The **2026 Union Budget** integrated the campaign with a new **National Institute of Hospitality (NIH)** to ensure the workforce is trained to handle the influx of international guests.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Variable Adoption:** Critics note that while registration is high, actual conversion rates (friends who eventually travel) remain inconsistent across different regions.
- **Visa Friction:** Some diaspora members have reported technical glitches in the portal when friends try to apply for the *gratis* (free) visa portion of the referral.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Experts often argue that while "marketing" (Chalo India) is strong, the "product" (last-mile infrastructure at hidden gems) still requires more investment to meet international standards

11. Incredible India Content Hub

The **Incredible India Content Hub** is a digital-first initiative launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** on **World Tourism Day (September 27, 2024)**. It serves as a comprehensive, high-quality digital repository designed to store and share multimedia assets to boost global tourism promotion.

Key Details (Updated to 2026)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Tourism](#), Government of India.
- **Implementing Agency:** The Ministry of Tourism is the primary driver, with content contributions from the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) and the Ministry of Culture. The portal itself was designed and developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
- **Scheme Type:** It functions as a **Central Sector** initiative, as it is fully funded and managed by the Central Government to promote India's global tourism brand.
- **Flagship/Umbrella Status:** It is part of the **Incredible India 2.0** campaign, which is the government's **flagship** international tourism marketing effort. It complements umbrella schemes like **Swadesh Darshan 2.0** and **PRASHAD**, which focus on physical infrastructure development.



- **Funding Mechanism:** Fully funded by the Ministry of Tourism's promotional budget. It utilizes **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** for specific services like travel bookings via Online Travel Agents (OTAs).

Aims and Objectives

- **Centralised Access:** To provide a single-point digital repository for travel trade professionals, media, and influencers to access high-quality promotional content.
- **Brand Amplification:** To empower stakeholders to effectively market "Incredible India" across global digital platforms.
- **Enhanced Experience:** To guide travelers through every stage of their journey—from discovery and planning to booking and feedback.

Features

- **Rich Media Library:** Over **5,000+ assets**, including high-definition images, films, brochures, and newsletters.
- **AI Integration:** Features an **AI-powered chatbot** for real-time travel assistance and personalized itineraries.
- **Seamless Booking:** Integrated platform for booking flights, hotels, cabs, buses, and ASI monument tickets through [official partners](#).
- **Immersive Tech:** As of 2026, the Ministry is integrating **Virtual Reality (VR)** for immersive tourism previews.

Achievements and Status (2026)

- **Reach:** The digital platform recorded approximately **26 lakh visitors** by mid-2025, with continued growth into 2026.
- **Digitization:** Successfully shifted from generic marketing to **theme-based tourism** (e.g., MICE, spiritual, and adventure) through targeted digital assets.
- **2026 Revamp:** A major digital overhaul was initiated in early 2026 to further refine digital storytelling and global online outreach.

Criticisms

- **Narrow Focus:** Critics argue that earlier versions of the campaign occasionally failed to highlight offbeat or niche destinations, focusing too heavily on major heritage sites.
- **Content Freshness:** Stakeholders have sometimes pointed to delays in updating multimedia content to reflect the latest ground-level infrastructure improvements.
- **Digital Divide:** Some observers note that the heavy focus on high-tech digital portals may not reach tourists in areas with limited internet connectivity or those preferring traditional travel assistance

12. National Destination Digital Knowledge Grid:



The **National Destination Digital Knowledge Grid** is a flagship initiative announced in the **Union Budget 2026–27** to digitally document and preserve India's cultural, spiritual, and heritage significance. It serves as a digital backbone for the tourism sector, transitioning it from simple sightseeing to data-driven, immersive experiences.

Key Overview (as of 2026)

- **Aims and Objectives:**

- **Digital Documentation:** Create a comprehensive digital repository of all places of cultural, spiritual, and heritage significance across India.
- **Employment Generation:** Foster an ecosystem for local researchers, historians, content creators, and technology partners.
- **Enhanced Tourism:** Use technology-led storytelling to improve visitor engagement and destination visibility.

- **Ministry & Implementing Agency:**

- **Nodal Ministry:** It is led by the **Ministry of Culture**.
- **Implementation Status:** As of early 2026, the Ministry is conducting consultations and assessments to finalize its technological architecture and features.

- **Scheme Type:**

- It is categorized as a **flagship scheme**.
- It operates as a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is fully funded and implemented by the Union Government, building upon earlier initiatives like *Swadesh Darshan 2.0*.

Core Features

- **Living Archive:** Utilises **3D Laser Scanning** and **Digital Twins** to create precise replicas of monuments (e.g., Dholavira, Leh Palace).
- **Unified Repository:** Integrates data from 15 major archaeological sites into a single platform for evidence-based planning and research.
- **Technology-Led Storytelling:** Employs AI and AR to provide research-backed, immersive interpretive layers for tourists.

Achievements & Progress (2026 Update)

- **Integration with Skills:** Complemented by a pilot program to **upskill 10,000 tourist guides** in 20 iconic destinations through IIM-led training.
- **Infrastructural Synergy:** Linked with the development of sustainable trails (mountain, turtle, and bird-watching) and the upgrading of 15 archaeological sites into experiential destinations.
- **Orange Economy:** Successfully created a niche job market for creative and historical professionals.

Criticisms

- **Data Privacy:** Concerns have been raised regarding the interoperability standards and **privacy safeguards** for sharing sensitive heritage data with global platforms.
- **Implementation Depth:** Skepticism remains about how effectively digital storytelling can replace or enhance the traditional human interface without losing cultural nuance.



- **Standardization Challenges:** Critics point to the difficulty of standardizing diverse regional histories into a singular digital grid without oversimplifying complex narratives

13. Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP):

Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP) is a **Central Sector Scheme** under the [Ministry of Tourism](#), designed to upgrade the skills of workers in both the organised and unorganised segments of the tourism and hospitality sector.

Core Objectives and Features

- **Primary Aims:** To capitalise on India's tourism potential by providing professional expertise to the local populace and creating employment opportunities in urban, rural, and tribal areas.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Umbrella Nature:** It serves as an **umbrella scheme** for sub-programmes such as **Hunar Se Rozgar Tak (HSRT)**, **Entrepreneurship Programme (EP)**, and **Skill Testing & Certification (ST&C)**.
 - **Focus Areas:** Training covers health and hygiene, basic service and cooking techniques, communication skills, etiquette, and first aid.
 - **Target Group:** Fresh entrants and existing service providers like cab drivers, hotel staff, street vendors, and monument guides.

Funding and Implementation

- **Funding Mechanism:** It is 100% funded by the Central Government (**Central Sector Scheme**). The Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to training institutes. Funds are typically **reimbursed** after training completion and submission of documents.
- **Implementing Agencies:** A network of central and state institutes, including:
 - **Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs)** and **Food Craft Institutes (FCIs)**.
 - Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management (IITTM).
 - **India Tourism Offices** and empanelled private sector training entities.

2026 Status and Achievements

- **Evaluation:** A 2025 third-party evaluation by the **Quality Council of India (QCI)** recommended continuing the scheme for its significant impact on the hospitality workforce.
- **Total Trained:** Since its inception in 2009-10, it has trained approximately **6.43 lakh individuals** as of late 2025/early 2026.
- **Recent Success:** Between FY 2020-21 and 2024-25, over **1.68 lakh individuals** were trained, with more than **36,000 securing placements**.
- **New Initiatives:** The launch of **Paryatan Mitra** and **Paryatan Didi** in 2024 focuses on community-driven responsible tourism.



Criticism and Challenges

- **Placement Gap:** While training numbers are high (6.43 lakh), placements (approx. 84,000) show a significant gap between skilling and industry absorption.
- **Duration Constraints:** Some training modules are very short-term (4-6 days), which critics argue may not be sufficient for deep skill development in specialized areas.
- **Infrastructure Variability:** Implementation effectiveness varies significantly across different empanelled private institutes compared to established IHMs

14. Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD 2.0):

Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD 2.0) is the revamped version of the Ministry of Tourism's flagship scheme, transitioning from a "circuit-based" to a "destination-centric" approach.

Core Details

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Tourism](#).
- **Implementing Agencies:** Respective State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations.
- **Scheme Type:** **Central Sector Scheme** (100% centrally funded via Grant-in-aid).
- **Category:** A **flagship scheme** of the Government of India.

Aims and Objectives

- **Sustainable Tourism:** Focus on environmental, socio-cultural, and economic sustainability.
- **Vocal for Local:** Aligns with *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* by enhancing local economies and creating jobs.
- **Destination Centricity:** Holistic development of specific destinations rather than broad circuits.
- **Private Investment:** Increasing private sector involvement in tourism, hospitality, and asset management.

Funding and Features

- **Funding Mechanism:** Central Financial Assistance is provided as 100% Grant-in-aid to States/UTs.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Challenge-Based Destination Development (CBDD):** A sub-scheme using a competitive approach to select destinations.
 - **Operational Mandates:** Mandatory "Carrying-Capacity Assessments" and "Visitor-Management Strategies" to prevent over-tourism.
 - **PM-JUGA:** Development of tribal homestays.
 - **O&M Responsibility:** While capital is provided by the Centre, operation and maintenance rest with the State/UT.

Update as of 2026

- **Sanctioned Projects:** As of early 2026, **53 projects** have been sanctioned under SD 2.0 with a total outlay of approximately **₹2208.31 crore**.



- **CBDD Progress:** 38 projects worth **₹697.94 crore** have been sanctioned under the Challenge-Based initiative.
- **Scheme Duration:** The scheme is currently approved for implementation until **March 2026**.

Achievements and Criticisms

Category

Details

Achievements Successfully shifted the focus to high-impact "Iconic Tourist Centres" like Hampi. Completed **75 projects** from the original SD 1.0 phase by March 2026. Launched a **Project Management Information System (PMIS)** for real-time tracking.

Criticisms **Sluggish Pace:** Over 84% of sanctioned SD 2.0 projects remained below 25% completion by April 2026. **Coordination Issues:** Delays attributed to poor coordination between the Centre and States. **Asset Ownership:** Challenges in revenue generation and maintenance by States after project completion.

15. Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD):

The **Challenge-Based Destination Development (CBDD)** is a specialized initiative launched by the [Ministry of Tourism](#) as a sub-scheme of **Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD 2.0)**. Announced in the Union Budget 2023–24, it marks a shift from a traditional proposal-queue model to a competitive, merit-based selection process.

Core Identity and Status (as of 2026)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Tourism](#), Government of India.
- **Implementing Agency:** State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the central government).
- **Classification:** It is considered a **Flagship** initiative under the broader **Swadesh Darshan** umbrella.

Aims and Objectives

The primary goal is the **holistic development** of destinations to provide an end-to-end tourist experience. Key objectives include:

- **Sustainable and Responsible Tourism:** Shifting focus to environment-friendly and community-led development.
- **Enhanced Visitor Journey:** Uplifting the entire journey from arrival and mobility to accommodation and local experiences.



- **Thematic Development:** Improving destinations under four specific themes: **Spiritual Tourism, Culture & Heritage, Ecotourism/Amrit Dharohar**, and the **Vibrant Village Program**.

Funding Mechanism

- **Competitive Challenge:** States submit themed proposals that are evaluated against criteria like destination readiness, tourism potential, and community engagement.
- **Direct Grants:** Financial assistance is provided to selected projects for infrastructure and management.
- **High-Value Allocation:** Some projects, designated as "Global Tourist Hubs," have been earmarked for up to **₹500 crore** each (₹300cr for infrastructure; ₹200cr for management).

Key Features

- **Convergence:** Encourages states to integrate their projects with other central initiatives like connectivity, skill development, and MSME support.
- **Digitalization:** Focus on real-time feedback dashboards and digital visitor services.
- **Management Over Infrastructure:** Unlike previous schemes that focused solely on building physical assets, CBDD emphasizes effective destination management and sustainability.

Achievements as of 2026

- **Project Sanctions:** As of early 2026, **38 projects** have been sanctioned across the country with a total outlay of approximately **₹697.94 crore**.
- **Thematic Progress:** Projects under the [Vibrant Villages theme](#) are active in border areas like Kibitho (Arunachal Pradesh) and Mana (Uttarakhand).
- **Holistic Completion:** The first wave of projects, such as those in Andhra Pradesh (Nagarjuna Sagar), are targeted for physical completion by **March 2026**.

Criticism and Challenges

- **State Capacity:** Smaller states sometimes struggle with the "challenge" model's requirements for detailed project reports (DPRs) and institutional readiness.
- **Implementation Delays:** While sanctioned quickly, physical completion remains dependent on local state agencies, leading to varying speeds of progress across different regions.
- **Resource Intensity:** The shift toward management systems (DMS) requires a level of digital expertise that is not consistently present in all local tourism boards

26. Thematic Tourism Trails:

As of 2026, **Thematic Tourism Trails** are a core component of the revamped **Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0)**, India's flagship tourism infrastructure scheme. Recently expanded in the **Union Budget 2026-27**, these trails focus on niche areas like eco-tourism, spiritual heritage, and adventure trekking.

Core Framework (as of 2026)



- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Tourism](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Respective **State Governments/UT Administrations** or designated Central Agencies.
- **Scheme Type:** **Central Sector Scheme** (100% centrally funded).
- **Status:** It is a **Flagship Scheme**. While it serves as an "umbrella" for various thematic developments, it is officially classified as a revamped flagship mission (SD2.0).

Aims & Objectives

- **Integrated Development:** Create theme-based circuits to enhance the overall tourist experience.
- **Sustainability:** Shift from broad circuits to a **destination-centric model** focusing on "Vocal for Local" and eco-friendly practices.
- **Livelihood Generation:** Actively involve local communities to create jobs in research, hospitality, and storytelling.
- **Private Investment:** Leverage Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for long-term asset management and maintenance.

Key Features & 2026 Updates

- **New Thematic Trails:** Budget 2026 introduced specialized trails:
 - **Ecological Trails:** Mountain trails in the Himalayas (HP, Uttarakhand, J&K) and Western/Eastern Ghats.
 - **Wildlife Trails:** Turtle Trails (Odisha, Karnataka, Kerala) and Bird Watching Trails ([Pulicat Lake](#)).
 - **Archaeological Sites:** Development of 15 major sites (e.g., [Lothal](#), Dholavira, Sarnath) as immersive destinations.
- **Challenge-Based Selection:** Destinations are now selected via a **Challenge Mode**, where states compete based on predefined standards.
- **Skill Push:** A pilot to train **10,000 tour guides** across 20 iconic sites in collaboration with IIMs.

Funding Mechanism

- **Phased Release:** Funds are released in tranches linked to **performance benchmarks** and state-level assessments.
- **State Contribution:** While project funding is 100% central, States are responsible for **land acquisition, O&M (Operation & Maintenance)**, and rehabilitation packages.
- **Convergence:** Utilizes CSR funds and integrates with schemes like PRASHAD and the [Vibrant Villages Program](#).

Achievements (2015–2026)

- **Completion Rate:** Under Swadesh Darshan 1.0, 75 out of 76 sanctioned projects have been physically completed.
- **Infrastructure Growth:** Sanctioned over **₹5,290 crore** in the first phase and an additional **₹2,100+ crore** for 53 projects under SD2.0 as of early 2026.
- **Niche Tourism:** Successfully established 15 thematic circuits (Buddhist, Coastal, Desert, etc.) before shifting to the current destination-centric model.



Criticisms

- **Environmental Sensitivity:** Experts warn that promoting mountain trails risks straining **fragile ecosystems** in areas like the Ghats and Himalayas.
- **Maintenance Issues:** Some completed sites have faced criticism for poor long-term **Operation & Maintenance**, which remains a state responsibility.
- **Community Integration:** While a stated goal, critics argue that actual **livelihood benefits** for local marginalized groups are sometimes secondary to large-scale infrastructure development

27. Buddhist Circuit in North-East:

The **Buddhist Circuit in the Northeast** is a dedicated tourism initiative announced in the **Union Budget 2026-27** to develop and preserve Buddhist heritage sites across six North-Eastern states.

Overview (As of 2026)

- **Target States:** Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura.
- **Ministry:** **Ministry of Tourism**, Government of India.
- **Implementing Agency:** The Ministry of Tourism in coordination with the respective **State Tourism Departments** and agencies like **IRCTC** for specialized tours.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is 100% funded by the Government of India.
- **Classification:** It functions as a **Thematic Circuit** under the broader **umbrella** of the [Swadesh Darshan 2.0](#) scheme.

Aims and Objectives

- **Heritage Preservation:** Conservation and restoration of ancient Buddhist temples and monasteries.
- **Tourism Development:** Strengthening tourism infrastructure to position the region as a global spiritual hub.
- **Regional Growth:** Promoting tourism-led socio-economic development and livelihood creation in border and tribal areas.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Strengthening India's **Act East Policy** and soft power by leveraging civilisational ties with South and Southeast Asia.

Key Features & Funding Mechanism

- **Infrastructure Components:** Development of pilgrimage interpretation centres, improved last-mile connectivity, and pilgrim amenities.
- **Sustainable Mobility:** Deployment of **4,000 electric buses** to facilitate low-carbon transport between sites.
- **Connectivity:** Integration with the **East Industrial Corridor** to link tourism hubs with logistics and markets.
- **Funding:** Funded entirely through central grants. The total allocation for the [Ministry of Tourism](#) in 2026-27 was approximately **₹2,438.40 crore**.



Recent Achievements (2025–2026)

- **Sikkim Spiritual Hub:** Completion of the "sacred triad" of statues—Lord Buddha, Guru Padmasambhava, and the world's tallest **Chenrezig statue**.
- **Glass Skywalk:** Launch of India's first transparent glass skywalk at Pelling, Sikkim, significantly boosting footfall.
- **Connectivity:** Improvement of regional air connectivity through the **UDAN scheme** specifically for Buddhist sites.

Criticism and Challenges

- **Lack of Outcome Data:** Critics and Parliamentary replies have noted that the Ministry does not maintain detailed data on measurable socio-economic outcomes, such as exact income increases for local families.
- **Development vs. Education:** Some public concern has been raised regarding prioritizing religious infrastructure over investments in science and technology education in the region.
- **Implementation Gaps:** While many projects are physically completed, critics often point to "last-mile" connectivity issues and the need for better-trained guides in foreign languages.

28. Heritage & Archaeological Site Development:

As of 2026, the primary scheme for heritage and archaeological site development is the newly proposed **Development of Excavation Sites and Heritage Complexes (DESH)**, announced in the **Union Budget 2026-27**. This initiative builds upon earlier programs like **PRASHAD** and **Adopt a Heritage 2.0** to transform historical sites into "vibrant, experiential cultural destinations".

1. Key Details of DESH (2026 Update)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Culture](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** Primarily the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#), often collaborating with state governments and private "Monument Mitras".
- **Scheme Type:** **Central Sector Scheme** (100% centrally funded).
- **Classification:** It acts as a **flagship scheme** for heritage-based tourism.

2. Aims and Objectives

- **Experiential Tourism:** Transforming 15 major archaeological sites (e.g., [Lothal](#), Dholavira, Sarnath) into world-class destinations.
- **Economic Growth:** Generating 100–200 direct/indirect jobs per site for local artisans, guides, and hospitality workers.
- **Public Engagement:** Opening excavated landscapes through curated walkways and immersive storytelling technologies.
- **Skill Development:** Training **10,000 tourist guides** through a pilot programme with Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).



3. Funding & Features

- **Funding Mechanism:** Direct central allocation. The ASI was allocated ₹1,235.78 crore for 2026-27, a significant portion of the Ministry's budget.
- **Integrated Infrastructure:** Focus on "last-mile connectivity," conservation labs, and visitor interpretation centres.
- **Digital Integration:** Development of a **National Destination Digital Knowledge Grid** to document sites digitally.

4. Achievements (as of 2026)

- **Site Expansion:** Inclusion of diverse sites from the Indus Valley (Rakhigarhi) to the medieval era (Jhansi Fort).
- **Monument Adoption:** Successfully signed multiple MoUs under **Adopt a Heritage 2.0** for sites like Qutub Minar and Agra Fort to enhance visitor amenities.
- **Heritage Listing:** India reached **44 UNESCO World Heritage Sites** by February 2026.

5. Criticisms

- **Maintenance Gaps:** Despite funding, many of the 3,686 centrally protected sites face deterioration due to lack of regular maintenance.
- **Regulatory Limbo:** Rigid protection laws often hinder local infrastructure development (e.g., roads, sanitation) near heritage sites.
- **Privatization Concerns:** Critics argue that "Monument Mitras" (private entities) might prioritize commercial interests over historical authenticity.

29. Purvodaya Tourism:

The **Purvodaya Tourism** initiative, part of the broader **Purvodaya Plan**, is a comprehensive strategy to transform Eastern India into a significant economic and tourism powerhouse. As of 2026, it focuses on five states: **Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh**.

Aims and Objectives

- **Regional Development:** To make Eastern India a growth engine through infrastructure and human resource development.
- **Infrastructure Enhancement:** Developing road, rail, and air connectivity, including new airports in Bihar and the **East Coast Industrial Corridor**.
- **Thematic Circuits:** Promoting the **Buddhist Tourism Circuit** across Northeast states (Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura).
- **Sustainability:** Integrating green mobility with the deployment of **4,000 electric buses** for tourist and local transport.

Key Features and Structure

- **Ministry:** Under the **Ministry of Tourism** and integrated with wider development goals of the **Ministry of Finance**.



- **Implementing Agency:** Executed primarily by the **Ministry of Tourism** in collaboration with State Governments and technical partners like Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) for skill development.
- **Scheme Type:** Operates as a **Central Sector Scheme**, as it is part of the integrated national development framework directly funded and managed by the central government.
- **Classification:** It is considered an **Umbrella Scheme** under the broader "Purvodaya" development vision, incorporating elements of existing flagship programs like **Swadesh Darshan 2.0** and **PRASHAD**.

2026 Updates and Achievements

- **Project Scaling:** As of early 2026, **76 projects** have been sanctioned under the aligned Swadesh Darshan framework, with 75 physically completed.
- **Budget 2026 Proposals:** Announced the creation of **five new integrated tourism destinations** (one in each Purvodaya state) and the development of 15 major archaeological sites into experiential hubs.
- **Connectivity:** Significant progress in sustainable transport with the rollout of 4,000 e-buses to improve last-mile access to remote heritage sites.
- **Skill Development:** A pilot project launched to provide world-class training to **10,000 tour guides**.

Criticism

- **Infrastructure vs. Impact:** Critics argue that the focus on "bricks and mortar" infrastructure (like airports and corridors) sometimes overshadows the preservation of local community identities and livelihoods.
- **Implementation Speed:** While many projects are physically complete, some stakeholders point to delays in achieving full operational excellence and high-speed rail connectivity to remote eastern areas.
- **Resource Extraction Concerns:** Some local voices have expressed concern that "Purvodaya" focuses too heavily on extracting raw materials from the Northeast to feed other industrial hubs.

30. Paryatan Mitra & Paryatan Didi:

The **Paryatan Mitra and Paryatan Didi** initiative is a national responsible tourism program launched on **August 15, 2024**, by the [Ministry of Tourism](#). It aims to transform local community members into tourism ambassadors and storytellers, enhancing the overall visitor experience while promoting sustainable employment.

Core Framework (As of May 2026)

- **Ministry & Agency:** It operates under the **Ministry of Tourism**, Government of India. The Ministry itself acts as the primary implementing agency, coordinating with local stakeholders at designated destinations.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Initiative** implemented under the broader **Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP)** scheme.
- **Status:** It is a key national initiative and part of the Ministry's strategic approach to **Responsible Tourism**.

Aims and Objectives

- **Enhance Tourist Experience:** Create a welcoming environment by training locals to be "tourist-friendly" ambassadors.



- **Empowerment:** Specifically focus on training **women (Paryatan Didi)** and **youth** to create new tourism products like heritage walks, food tours, and craft experiences.
- **Sustainability & Hospitality:** Instill the philosophy of "**Atithi Devo Bhava**" while promoting general cleanliness, safety, and sustainable tourism practices.
- **Digital Visibility:** Provide training in digital literacy and tools so local experiences are discoverable to global tourists.

PIB +4

Key Features

- **Broad Target Groups:** Includes cab drivers, hotel staff, street vendors, students, and police personnel who frequently interact with tourists.
- **The 5Ps Strategy:** Focused on **People, Place, Product, Planet, and Promotion.**
- **Recognition:** Trained participants are recognized with a **dedicated badge and identity**, serving as a mark of quality and assurance for tourists.

Achievements (Updated May 2026)

- **Expansion:** Following a successful pilot in 6 destinations (Orchha, Bodh Gaya, Aizawl, Jodhpur, Gandikota, and Sri Vijaya Puram), the program was expanded to **50 tourist destinations** nationwide.
- **Training Milestones:** As of late 2025, over **4,000 individuals** have been successfully trained under the initiative.
- **Financial Synergy:** In the **Budget 2025-26**, the government linked this initiative with the [PMMY \(MUDRA\) Loan](#) scheme, specifically creating a category for homestays to help trained locals start their own businesses.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Skill Retention:** Concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of the training and whether participants continue to apply these standards after the initial certification.
- **Infrastructural Gaps:** Critics argue that while "soft skills" (hospitality) are being addressed, many tourist destinations still lack the physical infrastructure (clean toilets, better connectivity) required to support a surge in visitors.
- **Uniformity:** Ensuring a uniform standard of training and hospitality across diverse linguistic and cultural regions remains a significant logistical hurdle

31. Dekho Apna Desh 2.0:

As of May 2026, **Dekho Apna Desh 2.0** is recognized as a **flagship initiative** of the **Ministry of Tourism**, aimed at promoting domestic travel and developing world-class tourist destinations through public participation.

Core Framework

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.



- **Implementing Agency:** The **Ministry of Tourism** serves as the primary nodal body, collaborating with other ministries (like the Ministry of Railways for Bharat Gaurav trains), the [MyGov](#) platform for digital engagement, and IRCTC for theme-based circuits.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** where the central government provides 100% funding for identified infrastructure and promotional projects, often integrated with broader programs like [Swadesh Darshan 2.0](#).
- **Classification:** It functions as a **flagship initiative** but is often implemented as a campaign under the broader **umbrella** of the Ministry's domestic tourism promotion strategy.

Aims and Objectives

- **Jan Bhagidari:** Engaging citizens through "People's Choice" polls to identify and rank the most preferred tourist attractions.
- **Domestic Promotion:** Encouraging Indians to explore the country's diverse cultural and natural heritage, specifically targeting "Viksit Bharat@2047" goals.
- **Destination Development:** Developing the "winning" attractions from public polls into world-class destinations.
- **Skill Development:** Promoting career opportunities in tourism for youth through education expos and training.

Key Features & Funding

- **Funding Mechanism:** Fully funded by the Ministry of Tourism, with specific allocations for branding (₹242 crores) and infrastructure (₹1,742 crores) as per recent budget frameworks.
- **People's Choice Poll:** A digital voting system where citizens pick favorite sites across categories like Spiritual, Culture & Heritage, Nature & Wildlife, and Adventure.
- **Bharat Gaurav Trains:** Collaboration with the Ministry of Railways to run theme-based circuits like the "Baba Saheb Ambedkar Yatra".
- **Digital Engagement:** Heavy use of webinars, quizzes, and a "Pledge" to visit at least 15 domestic sites.

Updates and Achievements (as of 2026)

- **Participation:** Millions have participated in the "People's Choice" poll, directly influencing the government's investment priorities for the coming years.
- **Destination Sanctions:** Several "iconic" destinations identified through the initiative have received funding for comprehensive development under the **SASCI** scheme (Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment).
- **Infrastructure Synergy:** Over 53 projects worth ₹2,208.27 crore have been sanctioned under the linked [Swadesh Darshan 2.0](#) as of early 2026.
- **Tourism Education:** Expansion of "Tourism Education Expos" in 2026 to create awareness among school students about hospitality careers.

Criticisms

- **Slow Initial Momentum:** Earlier versions (launched in 2020) struggled to gain traction due to pandemic-related travel restrictions.



- **Implementation Gaps:** Concerns have been raised regarding the actual "financial help" to tourists vs. purely promotional activities like quizzes and pledges.
- **State Dependency:** While the scheme is central, its success on the ground often depends on the state government's ability to maintain assets and manage local tourism

32. National Institute of Hospitality (NIH):

The **National Institute of Hospitality (NIH)** was proposed in the **Union Budget 2026** as a premier institution to revolutionise hospitality education in India. It is formed by upgrading the existing [National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology \(NCHMCT\)](#) to align academic excellence with modern industry requirements.

Core Framework (as of 2026)

- **Ministry:** Under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Tourism**, Government of India.
- **Implementing Agency:** The [National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology \(NCHMCT\)](#) serves as the primary body being transitioned into the NIH structure.
- **Scheme Type:** It operates as a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government), specifically under the [Scheme of Financial Assistance to IHMs/FCIs/NCHMCT/PSUs](#).
- **Status:** It is envisioned as a **flagship initiative** for tourism-led employment and skill development.

Aims and Objectives

- **Industry-Academia Bridge:** To act as a vital link between government, industry leaders, and academic researchers.
- **Standardisation:** To professionalise the sector by strengthening service standards and aligning curriculum with global trends.
- **Employment Generation:** To maximise the tourism sector's role in creating jobs and expanding the local economy.

Key Features & Funding Mechanism

- **Curriculum Upgradation:** Continuous evolution of course content to meet global hospitality demands.
- **Pilot Guide Upskilling:** A specific 2026 initiative to upskill **10,000 tourist guides** across 20 iconic sites through high-quality 12-week hybrid training.
- **Digital Grid:** Establishment of a [National Destination Digital Knowledge Grid](#) to document cultural and spiritual sites.
- **Funding:** Funded through central grants-in-aid and a dedicated "Fund of the National Institute of Hospitality" which includes government allocations, fees, and donations.

Achievements (2026 Update)



- **Budget Allocation:** The Ministry of Tourism received an allocation of **₹2,438.4 crore** in Budget 2026 to support these initiatives.
- **Tourism Education Expo:** Organized across 10 states to raise awareness about hospitality careers among students.
- **Skill Partnerships:** Established collaborations with Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) for advanced training modules.

Criticisms & Challenges

- **Skill-Gap Concerns:** Industry experts note a persistent gap between theoretical training and "operational readiness" in live hotel environments.
- **Retention Issues:** High attrition rates remain a challenge, with critics arguing that institutional reform must be matched by clearer career pathways for graduates.
- **Funding Disparity:** While new initiatives are launched, some reports highlighted that the 2026 allocation was slightly lower than the previous year's budgetary estimate

33. Archaeological Revitalisation:

As of 2026, the **Archaeological Revitalisation** initiative is primarily embodied by the new **DESH (Development of Excavation Sites and Heritage Complexes)** scheme. Proposed in the **Union Budget 2026-27**, it aims to transform 15 major archaeological sites into "experiential cultural destinations" to boost tourism and local economies.

Overview of the DESH Scheme (2026)

- **Ministry:** [Ministry of Culture](#).
- **Implementing Agency:** [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#).
- **Scheme Nature:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, as monuments of national importance fall under the Union List (Entry 67) and are directly funded by the Central Government.
- **Classification:** It acts as a **Flagship initiative** for heritage-based tourism within the broader cultural framework.

Aims and Objectives

- **Experiential Tourism:** Converting excavated landscapes into vibrant destinations with curated walkways and immersive storytelling.
- **Economic Upliftment:** Generating 100–200 direct and indirect jobs per site for artisans, guides, and conservators.
- **Decentralised Tourism:** Shifting footfall from overcrowded "iconic" spots to emerging heritage locations like **Rakhigarhi, Dholavira, and Adichanallur**.
- **Conservation Infrastructure:** Modernising sites with interpretation centres and advanced conservation labs.



Key Features & Funding

- **Target Sites:** 15 sites including Lothal, Sarnath, Hastinapur, and Leh Palace.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Direct budgetary allocation; for instance, the conservation budget for 2024-25 was approximately **₹374 crore**, with specific project funds allocated via the National Culture Fund (NCF) to allow for private and CSR partnerships.
- **Training:** A pilot programme with Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) is set to train **10,000 tourist guides** in professional storytelling and visitor management.

Achievements (2026 Update)

- **Digital Documentation:** The **National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA)** has successfully documented **1.84 lakh monuments** and **17.20 lakh antiquities**.
- **Technology Integration:** Widespread use of **LiDAR mapping**, **GIS**, and **3D laser scanning** for high-precision structural stabilization.
- **Global Recognition:** India's UNESCO profile has expanded to **44 World Heritage Sites** as of mid-2026.

Criticisms

- **Restrictive Regulations:** Critics argue the AMASR Act's uniform "100-meter prohibited zone" hampers local economic development and can inadvertently encourage illegal encroachments due to lack of regulated local facilities.
- **Implementation Speed:** Historically, reliance on ASI as the sole agency for project reports has led to slow fund utilization and delays.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Experts caution that "unchecked tourism" at delicate archaeological sites could risk physical degradation if visitor footfall is not strictly managed

34. Niche & Thematic Tourism

In India, **Niche and Thematic Tourism** is primarily structured under the **Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0)** scheme and various dedicated national strategies managed by the **Ministry of Tourism**. As of 2026, the focus has shifted from creating physical "circuits" to developing sustainable, destination-centric "Global Tourist Hubs".

1. Core Governance & Framework

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Tourism.
- **Implementing Agency:** State Governments and UT Administrations are the primary executors. They receive Central Financial Assistance (CFA) for infrastructure, while specialized bodies like the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and **Central Nodal Agencies (CNAs)** manage specific segments (e.g., CNA-Sustainable Tourism, CNA-Adventure Tourism).
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% centrally funded).



- **Classification:** It is a **Flagship Scheme** (specifically [Swadesh Darshan](#)) that acts as an **umbrella** for various thematic sub-schemes like *Challenge-Based Destination Development (CBDD)*.

2. Aims, Objectives & Features (2026 Update)

The primary aim is to position India as a **365-day destination** by diversifying beyond traditional sightseeing.

- **Key Objectives:**
 - **Sustainable Growth:** Shift to a destination-centric model via SD2.0 to ensure long-term ecological and economic viability.
 - **Global Standard Hubs:** Developing 50 destinations as "Global Tourist Hubs" with financial support of up to **₹500 crore per project**.
 - **Skill Enrichment:** Upskilling 10,000 guides through IIM-led programs and upgrading training institutes to the [National Institute of Hospitality](#).
- **Core Features/Themes:**
 - **Niche Segments:** Medical & Wellness, Cruise, Adventure, Golf, MICE, and Rural Tourism.
 - **Thematic Trails:** Budget 2026 introduced specific trails for **Astro-tourism**, **Eco-trails** (e.g., Turtle trails in Odisha/Kerala), and **Buddhist Circuits** in the North-East.

3. Funding Mechanism

- **Direct Grants:** The Ministry provides 100% funding for sanctioned infrastructure projects under SD2.0.
- **Challenge-Based Funding:** States compete for funds (e.g., CBDD sub-scheme) based on the quality of their destination management plans.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** Used extensively for the **five new Regional Medical Hubs** and asset management at tourist sites.

4. Achievements & Criticisms (As of 2026)

Achievements

Project Completion: 75 of 76 original Swadesh Darshan projects completed by 2026.

Diversification: Successful launch of high-value segments like [Astro-tourism](#) and experiential archeological sites.

Digital Integration: Creation of

Criticisms

Maintenance Gap: Critics point to poor Operation & Maintenance (O&M) once projects are handed back to States.

Over-tourism Risks: Rapid infrastructure development in fragile zones (e.g., Himalayan trails) faces pushback from environmentalists.

Under-utilized Funds: Challenges in fund



the **National Destination Digital Knowledge Grid** to catalog cultural assets.

absorption by some States, leading to delays in "Global Hub" transformations.

35. Sustainable Eco-Trails:

The **Sustainable Eco-Trails** initiative was a major highlight of the **Union Budget 2026-27**, aimed at positioning India as a premier global destination for ecologically conscious trekking and hiking.

Aims and Objectives

- **World-Class Infrastructure:** Develop ecologically sustainable mountain trails to offer "world-class" trekking and hiking experiences.
- **Job Creation:** Use tourism as a key engine for rural growth and local employment.
- **Conservation:** Protect fragile ecosystems by implementing regulated routes, visitor caps, and infrastructure that minimizes biodiversity impact.
- **Livelihood Support:** Empower local communities by training them as certified guides and promoting rural hospitality.

Key Features

- **Regional Focus:** Primary development in **Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir**.
- **Thematic Expansion:** Includes **Araku Valley** (Eastern Ghats), **Pothigai Malai** (Western Ghats), **Turtle Trails** (Odisha, Karnataka, Kerala), and birdwatching circuits at **Pulicat Lake**.
- **Infrastructure:** Upgraded and newly mapped trekking circuits with a focus on safety, accessibility, and minimal environmental footprint.
- **Regulation:** Integration with the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026**, specifically for fragile hilly and island regions.

Administrative & Funding Structure (as of 2026)

Feature	Detail
Ministry	Ministry of Tourism (Nodal) in coordination with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
Implementing Agency	Respective State Tourism Departments and State Forest Departments, often via Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).
Scheme Type	It functions as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, providing financial assistance to States/UTs for infrastructure.
Category	It is a flagship initiative under the broader Swadesh Darshan 2.0



(SD 2.0) umbrella.

Funding Provided through budgetary outlays to States, subject to Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and adherence to sustainability guidelines.

Achievements (Updated 2026)

- **Strategic Mapping:** Successful identification and mapping of high-altitude and coastal circuits across 8+ states.
- **Livelihood Integration:** Upskilling initiatives for local guides have been launched, particularly in the Himalayan belt.
- **Global Positioning:** India is hosting the first **Big Cat Summit** in 2026, creating synergy between wildlife conservation and trail-based tourism.

Criticisms

- **Implementation Gap:** Analysts warn that creating "sustainable" trails will be a significant operational challenge for State governments due to existing waste management and infrastructure deficits.
- **Ecological Fragility:** Environmentalists argue that "world-class" hiking experiences often lead to over-commercialization, which may contradict conservation goals despite "sustainable" branding.
- **Policy Signal vs. Fund:** Some experts noted the 2026 announcement acted more as a "policy signal" than a dedicated new funding pool, potentially leading to slow execution

36. Heal in India (Medical Tourism):

Heal in India is a government-led initiative launched to position India as a premier global hub for **Medical Value Travel (MVT)**, integrating modern medicine with traditional AYUSH treatments.

Core Details & Governance

- **Ministry:** Primarily under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Tourism** and **Ministry of AYUSH**.
- **Implementing Agency:** MoHFW oversees the project, while the **National Medical & Wellness Tourism Promotion Board (NMWTB)** serves as an umbrella body for multi-ministry coordination.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme**.
- **Status:** It is a **Flagship initiative** designed as a sub-brand of "Incredible India".

Aims and Objectives

- **Global Positioning:** To make India a "Destination of Choice" for quality healthcare services.
- **Holistic Healing:** Promoting an "integrated healthcare ecosystem" that combines modern surgery with traditional systems like Ayurveda and Yoga.
- **Standardisation:** Creating a unified digital platform to streamline the patient journey from discovery to post-treatment care.
- **Revenue & Growth:** Boosting the Indian health and hospitality sectors to reach a projected **\$13.42 billion** market by 2026.

Funding & Features (2026 Update)



- **Funding Mechanism:** Fully funded by the Central Government. The **Union Budget 2026-27** proposed a **₹10,000 crore** allocation for establishing medical hubs.
- **One-Stop Portal:** A multi-lingual digital portal for international patients to find accredited hospitals, book treatments, and track visa statuses.
- **Regional Medical Hubs:** Establishment of **five regional hubs** through private-sector partnerships for diagnostics, specialized surgery, and AYUSH rehabilitation.
- **Visa Facilitation:** Introduction of the **e-AYUSH Visa** and simplified e-Medical Visas for nationals from 172 countries.
- **Skill Training:** Upskilling 10,000 guides and training medical staff in foreign languages and cross-cultural sensitivities.

Achievements (as of 2026)

- **Patient Volume:** India now welcomes over **2.5 million international patients** annually.
- **Global Ranking:** India reached the **10th rank globally** on the Medical Tourism Index (MTI).
- **Cost Efficiency:** Maintaining treatments at **60–90% lower costs** than Western countries while providing world-class quality.
- **Infrastructure:** Integration of over 1,60,000 Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and 12,500 Ayush HWCs for universal primary care.

Criticisms

- **Domestic vs. Global Focus:** Critics argue that focusing on "medical value travel" may divert high-end medical resources and specialist talent away from the rural Indian population.
- **Standardisation Gaps:** Despite accreditation efforts, there are concerns regarding the inconsistent quality of service across unaccredited MVT facilitators.
- **Post-Treatment Support:** Limited infrastructure for long-term international patient follow-ups once they return to their home countries

37. MICE Tourism:

MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism in India has evolved into a strategic economic driver as of 2026, transitioning from a niche segment to a central focus for national tourism growth.

Administrative Framework

- **Nodal Ministry:** [Ministry of Tourism](#) (MOT), Government of India.
- **Implementing/Nodal Agency:** India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB). Starting in 2026, the government is also establishing independent **City-Level Convention Promotion Bureaus** to act as "single window" facilitators for international event organisers.
- **Scheme Type:** MICE is primarily promoted through **Central Sector Schemes**, including:
 - **Swadesh Darshan 2.0:** Focuses on developing destination-specific infrastructure.



- **Champion Services Sector Scheme (CSSS):** Provides specific financial incentives for MICE organisers, including GST reimbursements.
- **Status:** It is part of the **Umbrella Strategy** known as the **National Strategy and Roadmap for MICE Industry (2022)** and is promoted under the flagship Incredible India campaign through the specialized sub-brand "**Meet in India**".

Aims & Objectives (2026 Update)

The primary goal is to double India's share in the global MICE market within five years (by 2030).

- **Institutional Support:** Establish an enabling framework at central, state, and city levels.
- **Infrastructure:** Position world-class venues like **Bharat Mandapam** and **Yashobhoomi** as global hubs.
- **Market Expansion:** Promote "Second Cities" (Tier-II/III cities like Jaipur, Kochi, and Indore) to de-congest metros.
- **Digital Integration:** Utilizing AI for delegate management, smart networking, and predictive insights.

Funding Mechanism & Features

- **Incentives:** Organisers are eligible for incentives like **GST reimbursement** for hotel stays and meetings under the CSSS, with a minimum participant requirement reduced to 250 (from 500) to support smaller, high-value corporate events.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** The new city bureaus are being set up on a PPP model to leverage private sector expertise.
- **E-Visa Support:** The **e-Conference Visa** facilitates easier entry for international delegates attending government-approved events.

2026 Status & Achievements

- **Market Value:** The Indian MICE market is valued at approximately **\$42.25 billion in 2026**, growing at a CAGR of nearly 12%.
- **Connectivity:** Massive expansion of infrastructure including over **157 operational airports** and 1,50,000 km of roads has improved accessibility to remote MICE venues.
- **Global Standing:** India ranked **7th** in the ICCA rankings for the Asia Pacific region in 2023, with projections for a top-5 global position by 2030.
- **Sustainability:** Nearly **50% of large venues** in 2026 have adopted green practices like paperless operations and energy-efficient systems to meet global ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) mandates.

Criticisms & Challenges

- **High Operational Costs:** Despite infrastructure growth, rising operational costs remain a hurdle for smaller domestic organisers.
- **Geographic Fragmentation:** While Tier-II cities are growing, 68% of the market share is still dominated by corporate events in major metros, leading to uneven development.



- **Market Share Gap:** India's share of the total trillion-dollar global MICE market remains **under 1%**, highlighting a significant gap between domestic capacity and global competitiveness.
- **Service Standardization:** Experts point to the need for stricter adoption of BIS standards across all service providers to ensure global credibility.

38. Global Big Cat Summit 2026:

The **Global Big Cat Summit 2026** (also known as the **IBCA Summit**) is the inaugural high-level international gathering of the [International Big Cat Alliance \(IBCA\)](#), scheduled to be held in **New Delhi, India, from June 1–2, 2026**.

Aims and Objectives

- **Halt & Reverse Decline:** Stop the decrease in big cat populations and reverse current trends globally.
- **Species Focus:** Targeted conservation for **seven** big cats: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.
- **The New Delhi Declaration:** The summit's primary objective is the adoption of this declaration to define shared global priorities for transboundary protection and wildlife corridors.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Creating a centralized repository for successful conservation models (like India's [Project Tiger](#)) to support resource-strapped countries.

Institutional Framework

- **Ministry:** Under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, Government of India.
- **Implementing Agency:** The [National Tiger Conservation Authority \(NTCA\)](#) serves as the nodal implementing agency in India.
- **Scheme Type:** The IBCA is established as a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Central Government) with a one-time budgetary support of ₹150 crore over five years (2023–24 to 2027–28).
- **Flagship/Umbrella:** It is considered a **flagship international initiative** that acts as an **umbrella platform** for various species-specific projects (like Project Tiger and Project Cheetah) to foster global "South-South" cooperation.

Key Features

- **Intergovernmental Status:** A treaty-based international organisation that became a legal entity on January 23, 2025.
- **Theme:** *"Save Big Cats, Save Humanity, Save Ecosystem"*.
- **Membership:** Open to **95 range countries** and other UN member states, conservation partners, and business groups.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Supported by India's initial ₹150 crore grant, it also aims to mobilize resources from multilateral agencies, scientific organisations, and corporate CSR.



Updates as of May 2026

- **Achievements:**

- Successfully transitioned into a fully functional **international legal entity** headquartered in India.
- Launched the official **IBCA Summit Website and Logo** on May 6, 2026.
- Secured participation from most of the 95 big cat range countries for the upcoming New Delhi summit.

- **Criticism:**

- **Funding Concerns:** Analysts have pointed out a "marginal" increase in the overall MoEFCC budget, with specific slashes in the "Development of Wildlife Habitats" fund, leading to claims that new international summits are prioritised over ground-level domestic habitat protection.
- **Focus Disparity:** Some critics argue the emphasis on "charismatic megafauna" (big cats) may overshadow the conservation needs of less popular but equally vital species

39. PM–Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM-JUGA):

The **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM-JUGA)**, also known as **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA)**, is India's largest-ever tribal development initiative launched on October 2, 2024. As of May 2026, it is the primary framework for saturating tribal-majority villages with essential services through a "whole-of-government" approach.

Core Details

- **Aims & Objectives:** The primary goal is to achieve **saturation** of critical gaps in infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood in **63,843 tribal-majority villages**. It aims to benefit over **5 crore tribal people** across 549 districts.
- **Funding Mechanism:** It has a total outlay of **₹79,156 crore** over five years. This is shared between the Centre and States:
 - **Central Share:** ₹56,333 crore.
 - **State Share:** ₹22,823 crore.
- **Ministry & Implementation:**
 - **Nodal Ministry:** [Ministry of Tribal Affairs \(MoTA\)](#) coordinates planning and monitoring.
 - **Implementing Agencies:** **17-line ministries** execute 25 specific interventions (e.g., Ministry of Tourism for homestays, Ministry of Rural Development for housing).
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**.
- **Flagship/Umbrella Status:** It is a **flagship umbrella mission** that converges existing schemes and resources under the [Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes \(DAPST\)](#).

Key Features & Innovative Schemes

1. **Tribal Homestays:** Funding of up to **₹5 lakh** per household for building or renovating homestays to promote tourism.



2. **Sustainable Livelihood for Forest Rights Act (FRA) Holders:** Focused support for **22 lakh FRA patta holders** to secure forest rights and sustainable income.
3. **Sickle Cell Disease Management:** Establishing **Centres of Competence** at AIIMS and other premier institutes for advanced diagnosis.
4. **Village Infrastructure:** Improving schools and hostels on the lines of [PM-Shri Schools](#) and providing pucca houses.

2026 Update & Achievements

- **Budget 2026-27:** The [DAPST allocation](#) has reached **₹1,39,189.53 crore**, a six-fold increase since 2016-17.
- **Physical Progress (as of mid-2025/early 2026):**
 - Over **4 lakh pucca houses** completed.
 - **26,513 villages** now have piped water supply.
 - **2,212 villages** provided with mobile connectivity.
 - **1,000 homestays** actively promoted under the [Swadesh Darshan](#) sub-scheme.

Criticisms & Challenges

- **Administrative Bottlenecks:** Critics point to the complexity of coordinating **17 different ministries**, which can lead to delays in fund disbursement and implementation at the ground level.
- **Saturation vs. Quality:** Concerns have been raised about focusing on "saturation" (numbers) rather than the long-term **quality and maintenance** of infrastructure in remote areas.
- **Budgetary Reductions:** Some specific components, like the [PM Janjatiya Vikas Mission \(PMJVM\)](#), saw budget cuts in previous cycles despite the overall increase in tribal funding

0. VGF-backed seaplane operations

The **Seaplane Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme**, as of May 2026, is a strategic initiative primarily integrated into the **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN**. It was significantly bolstered in the **Union Budget 2026–27** to revitalize water-based aviation through financial support for operations and indigenous manufacturing.

Overview and Governance

- **Ministry:** **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)**. The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways** also collaborates on developing water aerodromes under the *Sagarmala* project.
- **Implementing Agency:** **Airports Authority of India (AAI)**.
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** under the broader UDAN framework.
- **Status:** It is a **Flagship Scheme** (UDAN is the overarching flagship program).

Aims and Objectives

- **Regional Connectivity:** Enhance last-mile and remote connectivity, specifically for hilly areas, islands (Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep), and coastal regions.



- **Tourism Promotion:** Facilitate easier access to remote religious and tourist sites near water bodies.
- **Indigenous Manufacturing:** Incentivize the domestic production of seaplanes to reduce import dependency.
- **Sustainability:** Promote green logistics and research into electric seaplanes.

Funding Mechanism & Features

- **Hybrid Subsidy Model:** As of early 2026, the framework includes a hybrid model for the first 24 months, combining **fixed annuity payments** with **seat-based VGF** to ensure predictable cash flows.
- **VGF Caps:** Typically covers up to **40% of the project cost** for infrastructure, but operational subsidies under UDAN are route-specific and based on competitive bidding.
- **Non-Scheduled Operator Permit (NSOP):** Operators can now use NSOPs, which simplifies regulatory requirements compared to full airline scheduled permits.
- **Concessions:** Includes exemptions on excise duty for fuel and reduced airport/landing charges at water aerodromes.

2026 Update: Achievements & Status

- **Route Awards:** Over **30 seaplane routes** have been awarded across states like Gujarat, Assam, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Water Aerodromes:** **14 water aerodromes** have been sanctioned, with key sites like Sardar Sarovar Dam (Statue of Unity) and Sabarmati Riverfront already having seen operational phases.
- **Budget 2026 Push:** The 2026-27 budget introduced specific incentives for **domestic seaplane manufacturing**, aiming to build a self-sustaining ecosystem rather than relying solely on leased foreign aircraft.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Sustainability Issues:** Previous operations (like the Ahmedabad-Kevadia route) faced frequent suspensions due to **high maintenance costs** and technical issues related to salt-water corrosion.
- **Low Passenger Demand:** Some routes were discontinued before their 3-year tenure due to low demand and commercial unviability despite VGF.
- **Infrastructure Delays:** Developing water aerodromes has been slower than expected due to environmental clearances and technical complexities of landing on varying water levels.
- **Regulatory Fragmentations:** Industry experts cite complex regulations spanning aviation, maritime, and environmental ministries as a "key bottleneck" for private players

41. Island & Port Connectivity:

The **Sagarmala Programme** is the flagship initiative of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**, serving as the "umbrella" framework for island and port connectivity in India. As of May 2026, it remains a **Central Sector Scheme**, meaning it is primarily funded and managed by the central government.

Aims, Objectives & Features

- **Primary Aim:** Promote **port-led development** by leveraging India's 7,500 km coastline and 14,500 km of navigable waterways.
- **Key Objectives:**



- Reduce logistics costs for Export-Import (EXIM) and domestic trade.
- Lower the cost of transporting bulk commodities by locating industries near the coast (Port-Led Industrialisation).
- Enhance domestic waterways (inland and coastal) in the multi-modal transport mix.
- **Key Features (Pillars):**
- **Port Modernisation:** Upgrading existing ports and building new "world-class" ones.
- **Connectivity Enhancement:** Strengthening links between ports and production/consumption centers via rail, road, and pipelines.
- **Port-Led Industrialisation:** Creating industrial clusters near ports to minimize transit.
- **Coastal Community Development:** Skilling and livelihood generation for local populations.
- **Coastal Shipping & Inland Water Transport:** Shifting freight from road/rail to more efficient water routes.

Funding & Implementation

- **Funding Mechanism:** MoPSW provides financial assistance—typically up to **50% of the project cost**—to state governments and other agencies. The remaining cost is met by implementing agencies or through Private-Public Partnerships (PPP).
- **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL):** Formerly SDCL, this Miniratna CPSE was rebranded in 2025 as India's first **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** dedicated to the maritime sector.
- **Implementing Agencies:** Projects are executed by **State Maritime Boards, Major Ports, State Governments,** and central agencies like **NHAI** or **Indian Railways**.

2026 Updates & Achievements

- **Project Progress:** As of March 2026, **315 projects** worth ₹1.57 lakh crore have been completed, with 210 under implementation and 320 in planning.
- **Logistics Efficiency:** Average vessel turnaround time dropped from 96 hours (2014) to **49.5 hours** in 2025.
- **Cargo Growth:** Indian major ports handled a record **915.17 million tonnes** of cargo in FY 2025–26.
- **Waterway Expansion:** Cargo movement through inland waterways grew by **700%** between 2014 and 2025.
- **Employment:** The program estimates a cumulative potential of **1 crore new jobs** (40 lakh direct, 60 lakh indirect).
- **Sagarmala 2.0:** The government is transitioning toward "Sagarmala 2.0," which envisions a total investment of **₹3.6 lakh crore** aligned with the "Viksit Bharat 2047" vision.

Criticisms & Challenges

- **Environmental Impact:** Concerns regarding the ecological sensitivity of island and coastal developments, particularly in the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.
- **Livelihood Displacement:** Some coastal communities and traditional fishing groups have voiced concerns about being marginalized by large-scale industrial infrastructure.
- **Implementation Delays:** While many projects are completed, a significant number (320) remain in the planning stage, facing bureaucratic or land acquisition hurdles.
- **Logistics Cost Disparity:** Despite improvements, India's logistics costs remain high relative to global standards, requiring deeper multi-modal integration



42. Development of the **Vishnupad Temple Corridor** and **Mahabodhi Temple Corridor**

The development of the **Vishnupad Temple Corridor** and **Mahabodhi Temple Corridor** in Bihar was officially announced in the Union Budget 2024-25 as part of the **Purvodaya** initiative. Modelled after the successful Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, these projects aim to transform these sites into world-class spiritual and tourist hubs.

Project Overview

- **Ministry: Ministry of Tourism.**
- **Implementing Agency:** Execution is primarily managed by the **State Government of Bihar** with financial and technical support from the Central Government.
- **Scheme Type:** These are **Central Sector Projects**. While often integrated with umbrella schemes like **PRASHAD** (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive), they are specifically funded as a "bonanza" for Bihar tourism development.
- **Classification:** Considered a **flagship initiative** under the broader **Purvodaya** umbrella scheme for the all-round development of eastern India.

Aims & Objectives

- **Transformation:** To create "world-class" pilgrimage and tourist destinations.
- **Economic Growth:** To create jobs, stimulate local investments, and unlock economic opportunities for the region.
- **Congestion Management:** To improve the visitor experience by reducing overcrowding and modernising infrastructure.

Key Features

- **Vishnupad Corridor (Gaya):** Includes a **108-foot Lord Vishnu statue** in the Falgu River, widened pedestrian paths, and improved riverfront ghats.
- **Mahabodhi Corridor (Bodh Gaya):** Focuses on blending spirituality with livelihoods, including a 1.5-metre-wide cycle track, kiosks for aromatherapy, and interpretation centres.
- **Infrastructure:** Both projects include queue management complexes, waiting halls, CCTV for safety, and modern sanitation.

Funding Mechanism

- **Dedicated Allocations:** Funded through the Union Budget. For example, ₹57.74 crores were initially allocated for the Vishnupad Corridor in 2024-25, with total project estimates reaching as high as **₹2,390 crores**.
- **Central Support:** The Central Government provides direct financial assistance to the Bihar state government for infrastructure development.

2026 Update: Achievements & Criticism

- **Achievements (as of May 2026):**



- **Project Momentum:** The Gaya railway station redevelopment, crucial for the corridor, is nearing completion with an estimated cost of ₹300 crores.
- **Planning:** Detailed Project Reports (DPR) have been submitted, focusing on sustainable operation and maintenance.
- **Criticisms & Challenges:**
 - **UNESCO Compliance:** Concerns have been raised by the Bodh Gaya Temple Advisory Board regarding potential conflicts with **UNESCO World Heritage regulations** at the Mahabodhi site.
 - **Sanctity Concerns:** Critics have stressed the need to ensure that development does not compromise the spiritual integrity and historical conservation standards of these ancient sites

43. Global Big Cat Summit 2026:

The **Global Big Cat Summit 2026** (also known as the **International Big Cat Alliance Summit**) is scheduled to be held in **New Delhi from June 1–3, 2026**. Hosted by India under the aegis of the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)**, it is the first-ever high-level international summit dedicated exclusively to the conservation of big cats.

Aims and Objectives

The summit's primary goal is to halt and reverse the decline of the world's seven major big cat species: **Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma**.

- **Unified Platform:** Unite 95 range countries, conservation partners, and scientists into a single coalition.
- **Policy Adoption:** Adopt the "**Delhi Declaration**," a first-of-its-kind global framework for transboundary big cat conservation.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Establish a centralized repository for best practices, such as India's success with **Project Tiger**.
- **Tackle Global Threats:** Address habitat loss, poaching, illegal wildlife trade, and climate-related biodiversity threats.

Governance and Implementation

- **Ministry:** It functions under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- **Implementing Agency:** The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** is the primary agency facilitating its establishment through the IBCA Secretariat.
- **Scheme Type:** While the summit is a high-level diplomatic event, the IBCA itself is a **treaty-based inter-governmental international organisation**. In India, it is supported by **one-time budgetary funding of ₹150 crore** over five years (2023–28), making it essentially a **Central Sector initiative** funded entirely by the Union Government.
- **Flagship Status:** It is considered a **flagship global conservation initiative** led by India, mirroring the scale of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Key Features and Funding

- **Funding Mechanism:** Supported by a ₹150 crore grant from the Government of India for the initial five years. Future funding is expected from member subscriptions, multilateral agencies, and corporate partnerships through **CSR funding**.



- **Landscape Approach:** Promotes "landscape-based" conservation rather than isolated protected areas, recognizing that big cats require large interconnected ecosystems.
- **Tech Integration:** Emphasizes AI camera traps, drone surveillance, and satellite monitoring.

2026 Status and Achievements

- **Formal Launch:** The IBCA became a legal international entity on **January 23, 2025**, and is now a full-fledged treaty-based organisation.
- **Membership:** As of May 2026, **17 countries** have formally joined, with over **30 others** expressing willingness to join.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** The official logo and summit website were launched in **May 2026** by Union Minister Bhupender Yadav.

Criticism and Challenges

- **Funding Long-Term Sustainability:** Critics express concern over whether the alliance can sustain its financial needs once India's initial 5-year grant concludes, especially for resource-poor range countries.
- **Geopolitical Friction:** Challenges in achieving "transboundary cooperation" between nations with historically strained relations, where shared wildlife corridors (e.g., across certain Asian borders) are difficult to manage.
- **Focus Disparity:** Some conservationists argue that while big cats are charismatic "keystone species," focusing exclusively on them might overshadow lesser-known endangered species that are equally critical to ecosystems

44. Amrit Dharohar & Eco-Trails:

The **Amrit Dharohar** initiative is a strategic effort launched in **June 2023** to promote the unique conservation values of India's Ramsar Sites. It operates as a specific initiative under the broader **National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA)** scheme.

Core Identity & Administration

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in collaboration with the **Ministry of Tourism**.
- **Implementing Agency:** Jointly executed by MoEF&CC, the **Ministry of Tourism, State Wetland Authorities**, and autonomous bodies like **IITTM** (Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management).
- **Scheme Type:** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** as funding is shared between the Centre and States (typically 60:40 or 90:10, though UTs receive 100% central share).
- **Classification:** It is considered a **Flagship Initiative** under the "Green Growth" priority of the Union Budget 2023-24.

Aims & Objectives

The primary goal is the **wise use of Ramsar Sites** over a three-year period (ending June 2026). Key objectives include:

- **Conservation:** Safeguarding biodiversity and maintaining the ecological character of wetlands.
- **Eco-Tourism:** Transitioning from high-volume tourism to **high-value nature tourism**.



- **Livelihoods:** Enhancing income for local communities through alternative livelihood programs like "Paryatan Navik" (boatman certification).
- **Climate Action:** Enhancing carbon stocks and assessing carbon sequestration in wetlands.

Key Features & Funding

- **Four Pillars:** Species & Habitat Conservation, Nature Tourism, Wetlands Livelihoods, and Wetlands Carbon Assessment.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Released through the **NPCA**, based on proposals from States/UTs. For example, by 2026, major funds were allocated for site-specific conservation and community training.
- **"Eco-Trails":** Specifically refers to developed pathways and tourism circuits within Ramsar sites designed to educate visitors while minimizing ecological impact.

Status Update (2026) & Achievements

- **Network Expansion:** India's Ramsar sites grew to **99 sites** by 2026, providing a massive footprint for the scheme's expansion.
- **Capacity Building:** Successfully trained local community members at pilot sites like **Sultanpur** (Haryana), **Chilika** (Odisha), and **Sirpur** (Madhya Pradesh) to act as certified nature guides.
- **Knowledge Products:** Launched numerous "Integrated Management Plans" (IMPs) for sites to ensure scientific conservation.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Resource Allocation:** Concerns remain regarding whether the allocated funds (roughly ₹3,079 crore for MoEF&CC in 2023-24) are sufficient to cover the rapidly increasing number of Ramsar sites.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Variation in geography and local administrative capacity across States has led to uneven progress in conservation efforts.
- **Urban Pressure:** Despite the scheme, urban wetlands continue to face high risks from encroachment and pollution, which the "Capacity Building" focus alone cannot solve

45. Paryatan Mitra & Paryatan Didi:

Paryatan Mitra & Paryatan Didi is a **National Responsible Tourism Initiative** launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** on August 15, 2024, to empower locals as "Ambassadors and Storytellers" for their destinations.

Aims and Objectives

- **Enhance Tourist Experience:** Create a "tourist-friendly" ecosystem where every local interaction reflects high standards of hospitality and care based on the *Atithi Devo Bhava* philosophy.
- **Social Inclusion:** Use tourism as a tool for social and economic progress, specifically targeting women and youth.
- **Employment Generation:** Provide technical upskilling and digital literacy to enable locals to become homestay owners, cultural guides, and nature trek leaders.
- **Sustainable Development:** Promote general cleanliness, safety, and sustainability at tourist sites.



Administrative Framework

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
- **Implementing Agency:** It is implemented through **Government and empanelled private institutes** (e.g., IHMs, Food Craft Institutes) under the broader **Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP)** scheme.
- **Scheme Type:** It is part of the **Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP)**, which is a **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Category:** While launched as a standalone initiative, it functions under the umbrella of the **CBSP scheme** and aligns with **Swadesh Darshan 2.0** for destination-centric development.

Key Features

- **Target Groups:** Cab drivers, hotel staff, street vendors, shopkeepers, and students.
- **Training Modules:** Covers hospitality, safety, sustainability, and **digital literacy** to help locals market their services online.
- **Recognition:** Trained individuals receive a **dedicated badge and identity**, acting as a quality mark for tourists.
- **Product Development:** Locals are trained to create niche experiences like food tours, craft tours, and heritage walks.

Status Update (as of May 2026)

- **Reach:** After an initial pilot in 6 destinations (including **Orchha, Bodh Gaya, and Jodhpur**), the program has been expanded to **50 tourist destinations** across India.
- **Achievements:**
 - **Training Volume:** Over **4,382 service providers** have been successfully trained and certified by early 2026.
 - **Impact:** A 2025 third-party evaluation by the **Quality Council of India** confirmed that the parent CBSP scheme significantly strengthened the tourism workforce.
 - **Financial Synergy:** Budget 2025-26 introduced a dedicated **MUDRA Loan category** for homestays to support entrepreneurs trained under this initiative.

Criticism & Challenges

- **Geographic Concentration:** Early critics pointed out that the program was limited to only a few "iconic" sites, though the 2026 expansion to 50 sites addresses this partially.
- **Digital Divide:** Despite digital literacy training, service providers in remote tribal or rural areas face challenges with connectivity and hardware access to maintain "online visibility".
- **Sustainability of Employment:** Critics have questioned whether the short-term training (often just a few days) is sufficient to ensure long-term, high-quality "storytelling" compared to professional, multi-year licensed guides

46. Visa Facilitation:



The primary visa facilitation mechanism in India is the **Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme**. As of **March 2026**, the Union Cabinet has approved its continuation for another five years (2026–2031) with a total budget of **₹1,800 crore**.

Core Details (Updated for 2026)

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **Implementing Agency:** National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- **Scheme Type:** **Central Sector Scheme** (100% funded by the Union Government).
- **Classification:** It is considered a **Mission Mode Project** under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP).
- **Legal Basis:** Now operates under the recently enacted **Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025**.

Aims and Objectives

The scheme's primary goal is to build a world-class immigration ecosystem that balances convenience with national security.

- **Modernization:** Upgrading services through emerging technologies like **AI, biometrics, and e-gates**.
- **Integration:** Linking 117 Immigration Check Posts (ICPs), 15 Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs), 854 Foreigners Registration Offices (FROs), and 192 Indian Missions abroad into a unified database.
- **Facilitation:** Simplifying processes for legitimate travellers (tourists, business, medical) to boost economic growth.
- **Security:** Strengthening the monitoring of foreign nationals and curbing illegal migration.

Key Features

- **Contactless Services:** Fully digital, faceless visa processing with online appointments and payments.
- **FTI-TTP (Fast Track Immigration-Trusted Traveller Programme):** Automated e-gates at 13 major airports for faster clearance.
- **Mobile-First Approach:** Introduction of mobile apps and self-service kiosks at airports for seamless movement.

Achievements (as of 2026)

- **Processing Speed:** Approximately **91.24% of e-Visa applications** are now cleared within 72 hours.
- **Clearance Efficiency:** Passenger clearance time at major airports has dropped from 5-6 minutes to **2.5-3 minutes**.
- **Trusted Travel:** The FTI-TTP program has reduced immigration clearance to just **30 seconds** for enrolled travellers.
- **Tracking Success:** The system recently successfully tracked and located several foreign nationals by tracing mandatory **Form-C** submissions.

Criticism and Challenges

- **Privacy Concerns:** Extensive data collection and biometric tracking have raised concerns regarding data security and the potential for misuse.
- **Digital Divide:** Technical glitches and the requirement for "digital-only" interactions can sometimes alienate travellers from countries with poor internet infrastructure.



- **Data Accuracy:** Occasional reporting of fragmented data entries across different agencies despite the goal of a unified system

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"லட்சங்கள் தேவையில்லை லட்சியம் போதும்"

UNIQUE UPSC CIVIL SERVICE (IAS/IPS) COACHING INSTITUTION

OFFLINE COURSE DETAILS

DURATION : 12 MONTHS + FREE ACCESS TO ALL TILL SUCCEEDING
IN CIVIL SERVICE EXAM
MODE : HYBRID (PHYSICAL CLASSROOM + ONLINE)
TIMING : 7.30 A.M TO 9.30 P.M

TOTAL FEES STRUCTURE INCOME SLAB WISE

BELOW ₹1 LAKH PER ANUM	: ₹ 6000/-
BETWEEN ₹1 LAKH TO ₹ 2.5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 12,000/-
BETWEEN ₹2.5 LAKH TO ₹ 5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 24,000/-
BETWEEN ₹5 LAKH TO ₹ 7 LAKH PA	: ₹ 36,000/-
BETWEEN ₹7 LAKH TO ₹ 8 LAKH PA	: ₹ 50,000/-
BETWEEN ₹8 LAKH TO ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 60,000/-
ABOVE ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 80,000/-

COURSE INCLUDE

- INCLUDE ABOVE ALL ONLINE COURSE FEATURES
- REGULAR MAINS WRITING PRACTICE AND MOCK TEST
- REGULAR MOCK INTERVIEWS
- REGULAR INTENSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION
- SKILL DEVELOPMENT COURSE INCLUDE SPOKEN ENGLISH
- TOPIC WISE GROUP DISCUSSIONS
- ETHICS BASED LEADERS STAGE TALKS
- REAL TIME ONE TO ONE MENTOR SHIP
- REGULAR SUBJECT WISE SEMINARS
- ACCESS TO LIBRARY AND BOOKS

ONLINE COURSE DETAILS

DURATION : 12 MONTHS
MODE : ONLINE
TIMING : 9.00 P.M TO 10.30 P.M

TOTAL FEES STRUCTURE INCOME SLAB WISE

BELOW ₹1 LAKH PER ANUM	: ₹ 3000/-
BETWEEN ₹1 LAKH TO ₹ 2.5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 6000/-
BETWEEN ₹2.5 LAKH TO ₹ 5 LAKH PA	: ₹ 12,000/-
BETWEEN ₹5 LAKH TO ₹ 7 LAKH PA	: ₹ 24,000/-
BETWEEN ₹7 LAKH TO ₹ 8 LAKH PA	: ₹ 36,000/-
BETWEEN ₹8 LAKH TO ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 50,000/-
ABOVE ₹ 10 LAKH PA	: ₹ 60,000/-

COURSE INCLUDE

- INCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF ALL PRELIMINARY SUBJECTS (INCLUDE CSAT)
- INCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF ALL MAINS SUBJECT (INCLUDES ETHICS SUBJECT)
- MONTHLY PRELIMINARY MOCK TEST

NOTE: SEVAKAR'S APPLYING FOR THE COURSE FEES BELOW 10 LAKH PER ANNUM HAVE TO SUBMIT
1. INCOME CERTIFICATE
2. SEVAKAR IAS INCOME DETERMINATION FORM