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**DAILY EDITORIAL
ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

India's Tourism Economy

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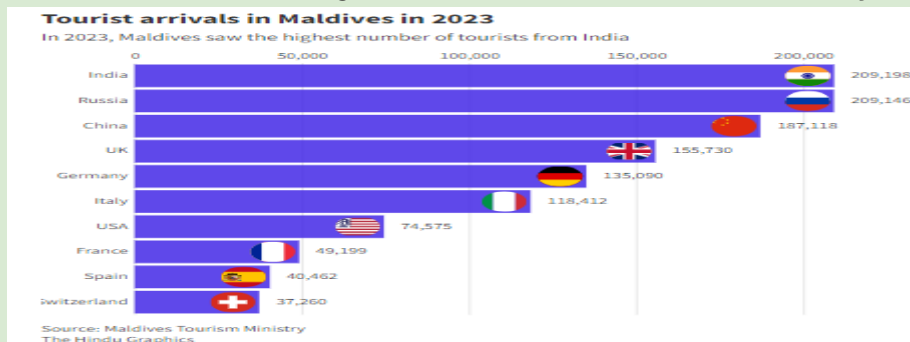
INDIA'S TOURISM ECONOMY

In Context

- The Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) 'strongly condemned' the derogatory remarks made on **PM Modi's post on Lakshadweep to promote Tourism**.

Do you know ?

- India emerged as **Maldives' third largest trade partner** in 2021.
- In 2022, India exported goods worth \$495.4 million to Maldives.
- The Maldivian economy is heavily dependent on its tourism sector and has been a prime tourist destination in South Asia, for its exquisite beaches, luxurious stays and delicious seafood.
- India has also been a consistent and significant contributor to the **Tourism Industry of the Maldives**



- Several social media users and even some travel companies claimed Indians are cancelling their scheduled trip to the Maldives following the recent diplomatic row.

About India's tourism Economy

- India is **geographically diverse** and **offers a variety of cultures** that come with its own experiences, making it one of the leading countries in terms of **international tourism expenditure**.
- The **Tourism and Hospitality sector** is an integral part of the Make in India initiative, serving as a vital economic catalyst that fuels job creation and rapid development.
- India has always been a popular destination for travellers exploring spiritual **enlightenment and self-discovery**.
 - For centuries many great foreign travellers have visited India and shared their experiences in the form of memoirs, travelogues, poetry and books, as **Megasthenes, Hiuen-Tsang, Marco Polo, and Fa-Hien** have shown.
- The Travel and Tourism industry is an important contributor to India's economy, providing employment opportunities to millions of people.

Potential

- India is a large market for travel and tourism. It offers a **diverse portfolio of niche** tourism products - cruises, adventure, medical, wellness, sports, MICE, eco-tourism, film, rural and religious tourism.
- The **Indian coastline** is one of the longest in the world, adding up to 7,516 km including the mainland, the **islands of Andaman and Nicobar, and Lakshadweep**.
 - This vast coastline is dotted with **beach destinations** both popular and unknown.
 - Popular destinations are **Goa, Kerala, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**
- India has been recognized as a **destination for spiritual tourism** for domestic and international tourists.
 - As the birthplace to four major world religions, i.e., Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, India can truly claim to be the world's spiritual beacon.

Challenges

- The major issues faced by the tourism industry relate to
 - ♦ entry formality (visa),
 - ♦ safety and security of tourists,
 - ♦ lack of tourism infrastructure,
 - ♦ lack of cleanliness and hygiene in tourist spots,
 - ♦ lack of connectivity,
 - ♦ high and multiple taxation, etc.

Initiatives of India

- In the **Union Budget 2023-24**, US\$ 290.4 million has been allocated to the Ministry of Tourism.
- Under the **Union Budget 2023-24**, an outlay of US\$ 170.85 million has been allocated for the **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** to develop a complete package of 50 tourist destinations for providing a wholesome tourism experience by facilitating physical, digital and virtual connectivity, availability of tourist guides and tourist security.
- Under Budget 2023-24, the Government has allocated US\$ 30.25 million for the development of tourist circuits under **PRASHAD**.
- The Ministry of Tourism has partnered with the Quality Council of India (QCI), to assist the **Hospitality Industry** in their preparedness to continue operations safely and mitigate risks arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic through an initiative called **SAATHI** (System for Assessment, Awareness and Training for Hospitality Industry).
- The Ministry of Tourism has also designated the **Year 2023** as the '**Visit India**' year, an invitation to the world to witness the splendor and magnificence that our nation has to offer.
- **India welcomes 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** in the tourism industry under the automatic route.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- Concept of '**Atithi Devo Bhava**' and multitude of tourism and religious destinations-
 - ♦ In India, we believe in the concept of 'Atithi Devo Bhava'—a guest is treated as God.
 - ♦ The rich cultural heritage, cuisine, the friendly and welcoming attitude of most Indians towards foreigners help in attracting more visitors to India.
- Tourism is an important source of foreign exchange in India similar to many other countries.
- There is a need to do a lot towards ease of visas, direct flights, and more connectivity to lower the cost of travel. Skilling is another important aspect which needs focus.
- Tourism sector should not only be centred on preserving rich heritage but also in creating world class infrastructure for tourism,
- It is now high time to work for the betterment of this sector so that from the upcoming years the number of foreign tourists may increase, and more people will be able to know about India's culture.

DAILY MAINS QUESTION

Elaborate the policy taken by the Government of India to meet the challenges of the Tourism Sector.