

Iconic Tourist sites

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Why was it news?

- During her Budget speech-2019, the Finance Minister said that 17 “Iconic Tourist Sites” in the country would be developed by the government into world class tourist destinations to serve as a model for other tourism sites.

Which are these sites?

- Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri (Uttar Pradesh), Ajanta & Ellora (Maharashtra), Humayun’s Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar (Delhi), Colva (Goa), Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Somnath and Dholavira (Gujarat), Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh), Hampi (Karnataka), Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu), Kaziranga (Assam), Kumarakom (Kerala) and the Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).

What is the Vision?

- The government is looking at overall development from the tourism point of view in and around these sites – which includes roads and infrastructure, hotels and lodges, connectivity and access”. As such, several ministries, from Railways to Civil Aviation, will be involved, while the Tourism Ministry will be the nodal agency.
- In keeping with international standards, interventions in and around the monuments will have elements of universal accessibility, green technology, and enhanced security for tourists.

Related scheme: ‘Adopt a Heritage’ scheme

- The ‘Adopt A Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan’-
- It is a collaborative effort by the Ministry of Tourism,

Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State/UTs Governments and envisages development and maintenance of tourist amenities at heritage sites and making them tourist friendly.

- The project primarily focuses on providing basic amenities that include cleanliness, public conveniences, safe drinking water, ease of access for tourists, signages, illumination, Wi-Fi etc.
- ***No fund is given by the Ministry of Tourism.*** The Project envisages involvement of Private/Public Companies / Organizations and Individuals to adopt Monuments, Natural Heritage Sites and other Tourist Sites in the country, primarily **under CSR.**
- Many of the monuments under Iconic heritage site were opened up for adoption in late 2017 under the Ministry of Tourism's Adopt a Heritage scheme.
- The Red Fort was adopted by the Dalmia Group, while the Qutub Minar and the Ajanta Caves were adopted by Yatra Online. But the momentum of the scheme has slowed down since, and only 11 MoUs have been signed so far.